



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0343GA-1 for Gwinnett County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's proposal sets forth a reform vision that builds on existing work in the core educational assurance areas and articulates a technology-based approach to individualized student learning. Measures are suggested for proposed goals. A data system to support personalized learning is the main focus of the proposal. Only mathematics and language arts in grades 5-12 are included in the proposed reforms.</p> <p><u>Existing work.</u> The application presents evidence of the District's vision, mission, goals, and strategic priorities for 2010 to 2020 that are aligned with the four Race to the Top assurance areas (standard and assessments, data systems, effective educators, low-achieving schools). The applicant states that the district's curriculum, <i>Academic Knowledge and Skills</i> (AKS), adopted in 1996, is revised annually to assure alignment with national standards including the Common Core State Standards. State and district measures assess student learning of the AKS. A longitudinal data system that can be accessed by teachers and education leaders has been in place since 1998. It provides achievement, program, attendance, and discipline information. The evidence provided regarding recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining of effective educators is weak. Stating that educators are well trained and held to high expectations does not adequately address this nor does access to web-based instructional resources. The role of the Weighted School Assessment in this area is not explained. Adequate Yearly Progress results and data from the State's <i>College and Career Readiness Performance Index</i> are presented to show that the district has no "low-performing" schools. The district's <i>Results-based Evaluation System</i> for school performance identifies schools performing below a district-established level as <i>Target</i>. These schools receive support to develop their school improvement plans, additional staff development opportunities, and district level support from curriculum, instruction, assessment, and special programs staff. Evidence of the implementation and results of this support are not included. The digital content, learning, assessment, and support system (eCLASS) would be phased in over several years to provide educators, students, and parents access to integrated student information, a robust repository of instructional resources, and communication tools.</p> <p><u>The Vision.</u> Building on existing work, the applicant proposes a personalized instructional program, <i>Enhanced Personalized Learning Initiative</i>, that will prepare students in grades five through twelve to succeed in college and the workplace by providing instructional recommendations based on a comprehensive student profile. Students would have access to self-selected programs of study regardless of school location. Student success and growth would be measured through a learning management system based on the existing data system. The system would provide parents, students and educators with access to standards-based instructional and learning strategies targeted to individual student needs. Several models for delivering focused professional development, especially around the new personalized learning initiative, are suggested. Lowest achieving schools would receive information about specific student learning gaps, interests, and strengths, enabling them to target these specific needs. They would receive personalized staff development and additional time from district instructional coaches; these interventions would be made available to all Target/At-risk schools regardless of their participation in the grant.</p> <p>Recruiting, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals is not adequately addressed. The staff development and buy-in discussion lacks specificity, and the goal for turning around low performing schools is vague.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant met this criteria. The process used to select the schools to participate is well explained and sound; the participating schools are listed as required; and the numbers and percents of participating students are given. The applicant was thoughtful in selecting the schools, grades (5-12 only), and content areas (mathematics and language arts only) for this application, justified the selections, and explained the rationale. It is noted that there may not have been an English Language Learner (ELL) specialist on the development team.

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a clear plan with timelines for activities to be implemented from 2013 through 2015 to schools in and beyond this grant initiative. Only mathematics and language arts in schools serving grades five through twelve are included. Also submitted is a plan for including all schools serving grades five through twelve by the year 2020. This table is less clear. It appears phase two schools (5-12 only) would implement the grant reforms by January of 2019. Remaining schools (5-12 only) would begin the reform process in 2018-2019; implementation would not occur by 2020.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The summative assessments used for section A(4) are the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) and Georgia's End-of-Course Test (EOCT). It is anticipated that the State will transition to a new assessment in 2014-2015 based on the Common Core State Standards. To facilitate score comparisons from different assessments with different scales, the applicant converted test scores to z-scores. While an explanation for determining growth rates was given, it is based on qualitative gauges. Growth rates for all students and subgroups except ELL and SWD are the same. Growth rates for ELL and SWD are half that of other groups. Growth rates increase each year based on the premise that, as the project is implemented, students will achieve at a faster rate. Baseline data, goals, and gap results were reported for all applicable subgroups for fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade mathematics, language arts, and reading; and grade nine EOCT language arts, American literature, mathematics I and II. Graduation rates were reported for 2008 through 2012 and projections for each year through 2017. A more detailed explanation of the rationale for determining growth would have been helpful. For All Students and six subgroups the goal is lower than initial year (2008). Expectations for ELL and SWD seem low. Goals for college enrollment seem to lack rigor as well.

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	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Only fifth grade reading scores on the state assessment were presented to illustrate improved results from Spring 2008 to Spring 2012, begging the questions, "Is this the only improvement that occurred in those four years?; what about the remaining grades and subject areas?" High school graduation rates listed in the previous section decline from 2008 to 2012 for all students and for all subgroups except Asian and Hispanic, and gaps persist. The other evidence presented in this section was erratic and inconsistent. Indicators changed from year to year, and no baseline (2008-2009) data were presented for several measures.

(b) The narrative indicates an "aggressive plan" is in place to improve Priority, Focus, and Target schools in the district and summarizes the steps to be taken for the schools in each category. No supporting data were presented. Evidence of success in improving performance in low-performing schools would have strengthened this section's response. It was stated that the district won the *Broad Prize for Urban Education* in 2010.

(c) School performance data are made available to educators, parents, and students via the web. School reports contain aggregate student performance data. It is unclear what individual student performance data are available to students and

parents. Teachers have online access to student profiles which provide their performance on assessments to the item level. Specifying what types of individual student data are available to educators, parents, and students would have strengthened this section's response.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant meets this criteria. The formula for allocating teachers to schools on the basis of student enrollment and salary schedules are on the District website. These items are also included in the Appendices of the application. The salary schedules include the four expense categories required for the application. Non-personnel expenditures are based on allocation formula for Budgeted Downloaded Funds to Local Schools, also on the website and included in the Appendices. The Public Budget Document is available on the website and is open for public input at least two public budget hearings. Area Board and budget meetings provide opportunities for the public to discuss how funds are spent, although no evidence of these meetings was included. Links to cited documents would have been helpful.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
--	-----------	----------

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Gwinnett Board of Education adopted the *Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Achievement*, this allows high performing schools more flexibility in school operations, instruction, and management. Lower performing schools may have flexibility after discussions with Area Superintendents. Because state laws and rules limited school innovation, the District entered into contract with the Georgia State Board of Education through The Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2) legislation. IE2 grants districts increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability. An explanation of how the Results Based Evaluation System increases school flexibility was not found.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
--	-----------	----------

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is a non-union school district. The applicant provided principals with talking points and a PowerPoint presentation to share with their faculties; teachers were given opportunities to voice their understanding of the proposal and provide feedback. The PowerPoint slides are included in the application as is a summary of feedback from the thirty-four participating schools. About 94% of the teachers in the participating schools provided support. Further evidence (agendas, lists of participants) of the principal meetings were not included. Except for the survey results, no evidence was provided for the school meetings. Information was shared with the public at an open Board of Education meeting and with the Board of Directors of the County's Public School Foundation. An article describing the opportunity was published in the local newspaper. Evidence of these opportunities was not provided. The application contains appropriate and very positive letters of support from diverse of stakeholders.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
---	----------	----------

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented its Theory of Change model as its plan to determine and analyze status. How the model was/may be used is unclear. Evidence is included to illustrate that GCPS is aware of needs and gaps. For example - About 3,000 learning objects (not clearly described) have been tagged with AKS and need to be tagged to student interest, student engagement, and misconception identifiers. The need for further item development with distracter analysis was noted, resulting in the addition of over 7,000 new items. The district has already contracted with a vendor to complete the item bank.

A table listing learning environments already implemented along with target populations, implementation years, and brief descriptions is included. An advisory group of cross-district representatives meets monthly to discuss goals, implementation, and process; issues are reported to the Superintendent's council. A table of identified needs/ gaps and current status is included; the source of the information in the table was not clearly stated. The reply to this section seems disconnected; clear connections and additional explanation would have resulted in a stronger response.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The development and implementation of eCLASS is an enormous, complex, challenging undertaking based on much cooperation, planning, and many inputs. The applicant does an adequate job of identifying the players, roles, and requirements and how they fit together. The eCLASS system is for mathematics and language arts in grades 5-12 only. It is assumed that science, social studies, and other content will still be presented through traditional means. How digital and traditional learning would fit into a teacher's and a student's day was not addressed.</p> <p>(a) The applicant successfully addresses most of the topics in section (C)(1)(a). Connecting learning to success, identifying standards-based goals, and structuring learning to achieve these goals seem to be hallmarks of the electronic learning management system, eCLASS, the heart of this proposal. The system would provide learning strategies electronically based on student needs and preferences 24-7 to students, parents, and teachers; access to the system would be available through personal and district-provided devices. Electronic student profiles would be updated to reflect student progress and new information. High school students would have opportunities to explore post-secondary and career pathways. Deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest would be expanded through blended learning opportunities outside the student's classroom and school. The system would include extracurricular activities developed by external partners to connect real-world situations to classroom learning and to provide exposure to diversity. How the approach would support goal-setting, teamwork, creativity, and problem solving skills was implied but not developed.</p> <p>(b) According to the application, the electronic learning management system will provide student access to personalized content and skill development based on and adjusted to student needs and performance. The learning strategies would be based on the District's <i>Quality Plus Teaching Strategies</i>, which are billed as research-based, proven, and effective. A description of the strategies is included in the application. District instructional calendars sequence instruction for students; use of these suggested instructional sequences in designing the system is recommended; if and how flexibility based on local considerations will be built into the system is not discussed. Just how the personalization, sequencing, and adjusting to meet the needs of all students would be accomplished in an electronic system is not detailed, but the applicant seems to have access to the appropriate building blocks.</p> <p>(c) The applicant proposes staff development to identify learning strategies and to discuss learning profiles with students. Video and written modules would be developed and distributed to all participating students and their parents to provide them training and support to understand how to use the tools and resources to manage their learning.</p> <p>A comprehensive table with timelines and responsible parties delineates specific project deliverables and activities. The table includes a plan to communicate with parents and students about personalized student profiles.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is less rigorously addressed than C(1). Since 2007 the Aspiring Principal Program has been in place to prepare future leaders for the District. If/how the training impacts student improvement and increasing student achievement was not clearly expressed by the applicant. No other general professional development activities are mentioned.</p> <p>A plan is included for selecting leadership for the grant activities. During year one of the project, two teacher leaders would be identified per participating school (one for mathematics and one for language arts) based on listed criteria. All but one criterion are subjective. How the subjective criteria would be used to select the leaders is not explained. The teacher leaders would work in a collaborative community during the first year to acquire the skills required to implement personalized learning environments; the scope of the work for year one is outlined in the application. In the remaining grant years the teacher leaders would serve as professional development coaches within their buildings to work with other</p>		

mathematics and language arts teachers to help them implement effective learning strategies. The work plan for years two through four is presented in less detail. Time requirements and logistical information are not mentioned.

It appears that the frequent measurement of progress toward meeting standards and improving and accelerating student progress would be a function of the eCLASS system. A teacher's role in brokering the information from system to student is not clear. This section would have been strengthened by an explanation of the roles of mathematics and language arts teachers in the eClass environment.

As a participant in Georgia's Race to the Top grant, the District is currently piloting the state's Teacher Effectiveness Measure in fifty-seven schools and will implement it in all schools in 2013-2014. The system provides feedback and triggers opportunities for professional development. Recommendations for professional growth opportunities would be generated by the e/class system for professional growth and development. It is unclear how this would transpire. It is also not apparent how school leaders would use information from the evaluation system to improve educator effectiveness and school climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

It appears that eCLASS would be the sole source/tool for actionable information, learning resources, and processes for matching student needs with resources and approaches and for structuring effective learning environments for individuals in mathematics and language arts.

A plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers was not found.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant states that, based on past performance, the current central office configuration as diagramed in the application would provide adequate support and services to participating schools. The divisions that would provide major support and their roles were identified. No new meetings would be required at the division or cabinet level to support the grant. It is stated that area superintendents would provide support for pilot school clusters; how this would occur was not mentioned. Similarly, it is stated that District curriculum and special education instructional coaches would provide additional staff development. The Information Management Division would continue enhancements of the portals and manage the development of supporting tools. It is not clear how the district office responsibilities would be coordinated or who would actually be in charge of the project.

(b) School principals in the District already have flexibility over scheduling, school personnel decisions, and school budgets; the applicant states that this will continue for the participating schools though no evidence was provided. The Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2) legislation grants the district flexibility from thirteen state laws; the specific school flexibilities this enables are not named. The contribution of the Results Based Evaluation System to increased flexibility is not clear; nor is how Staff Allotment Processes provide flexibility explained. The application states that these processes could be "enhanced as needed" to optimize resources; no procedure for accomplishing this was included.

(c, d) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery in multiple ways and timeframes is not yet established in the district. The application states that this could happen district-wide pending the development of effective measurement tools by the District, but no assurance was given that it would happen. Isolated examples of flexibility from seat time and credit and grade recovery were pointed out; these initiatives indicate a district willingness to allow flexibility, but they are insufficient to support this section.

(e) This section is not sufficiently elaborated. My eCLASS provides digital resources including progress updates for anytime, anywhere access. The application states that special education students have access to the same texts as regular students and to "supporting instructional materials based on identified need in their IEP." Nowhere else in the application is the use of IEP information mentioned, leaving the reviewer to wonder if it is a consideration. Supports for ELL students are listed, but it is unknown whether these resources are part of eCLASS.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Existing initiatives to provide equitable access to technology for students and parents are described, but neither evidence nor indicators of success is included. Only a modest attempt is made to quantify access. Teacher and classroom access to computers is described, but no evidence that the availability is sufficient to meet the needs of all students was found. Schools can use school funds to purchase technology improvements and upgrades; again, no indication of the prevalence of this practice was found. Technology availability for parents was describe in story format, again giving reviewers no inkling of the actual access available. No other learning resources were discussed in this section.</p> <p>(b) Again the applicant describes several levels of technical support provided to schools and to students from the district and school levels, but no accounting of the effectiveness of the support is provided. It appears each school has a technology support team that includes a media specialist, a local technology coordinator, and a support technician; the roles of these staff members are listed. The latest version of a planning document was referred to in the section, but it was not provided for reviewers. The statement that special education software and hardware needs are supported by IEPs seems backwards. Support to parents and other stakeholders is not mentioned.</p> <p>(c) The applicant describes the many technology offerings made available to parents and students but is nearly silent about whether exporting information in an open data format is supported.</p> <p>(d) The applicant provided a table of several of the interoperable data systems available at the district level and indicated for each system the intended users (student, parent, teacher).</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This response resembles brainstorming rather than a plan. The continuous improvement process proposed to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward meeting project goals is vague, incomplete, incoherent, fragmented, and confusing. Leadership positions are named (co-directors, Project Manager, Project Director); some are district employees; some are contractors. Responsibilities of and relationships between contractors and employees are not clear; nor are parameters of authority. While some duties and responsibilities are discussed, job descriptions have not been created. It is difficult to determine who does what. A diagram to illustrate the reporting structure and major responsibilities of the leaders would have helped clarify this. The Management Council is made up of the Associate Superintendent, co-directors, project "leads" (uncertain which positions these are), budget manager, and others to be determined. The Council's job is to review the progress indicators, flagging those not on track and requiring study by a subcommittee. Revisions would be reevaluated and reviewed. The thirty-one member Advisory Council, made up of a diverse group of stakeholders, would review goals and progress and provide feedback. The recipient of the feedback was not disclosed. The list of players in the continuous improvement plan is extensive; however roles, responsibilities, and specifics are lacking. Details regarding monitoring, measuring, improving, reevaluating, and sharing results are sparse.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant provides a comprehensive list of constituents with whom communication will be maintained as well as the frequency of and vehicle for the communication.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes thirteen performance measures: three for all students, five for grades 4-8, and five for grades 9-12. All the required measures except those for grades K-3 are addressed. (The focus of the proposal is grades 5-12.) The applicant-proposed measure for all students, average teacher attendance rate, seems inappropriate because nothing in the proposal targets teacher attendance. Further, it may be difficult to set for subgroups using this measure. The proposed metric for the grades 4-8 measure regarding the number of participating students on track for college/career readiness (average number of Graduation Assets by subgroup) requires additional explanation. The rationale for selecting the applicant-proposed measures was provided. Data for the goals regarding highly-effective and effective teachers were not included because they won't be available until 2014. The Teacher and Principal Effectiveness measures were designed to meet state RTTT requirements; Georgia's RTTT application was approved in 2012. Baseline and targets for Graduate Assets will not be available until December 2012. Interim assessment data won't be available until November of 2013; thus no baseline data or targets are available. FAFSA data are available for all students only. Only percents are given for the measure involving the End of Pathway Assessment. For several measures where targets are included, identical gaps for subgroups persist across the targets for all five years, indicating no attempts to decrease such gaps.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant would partner with the University of Georgia's Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, and Policy to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. An outline of evaluation activities by year prepared by University staff is included in the appendix of the proposal. The proposed evaluation activities seem appropriate.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant's budget identifies all funds that would support the project and seems reasonable and sufficient to sustain the development and implementation of the proposal. It delineates one-time investments and ongoing operational costs. Four connected and interdependent projects within the proposal are identified. Appropriate budgets for each project are provided.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Subsections 1 (Budget) and 2 (Sustainability of Project Goals) of section F are addressed concurrently. Options to support sustainability of funds include a referendum to continue the county-wide Special 1% Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for 2017-21. It is currently approved through December of 2016. Monies from the district's general funds are suggested to replace Title IIA funding if that funding is no longer available for professional development activities. No evidence that general funds would be available or sufficient was found. The District's Director of Community Involvement and school principals would work to continue contributions from business and private partners beyond the grant year. A high-quality plan for sustainability, however, was not found.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has no formal mechanism for augmenting the schools' resources by integrating public or private services that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of participating students. The applicant acknowledges, however, that partnerships exist in some of the participating schools and pledges to support these local partnerships. To receive funding from the RTTT-D grant for a partnership, a school and partnering organization would submit a joint proposal containing a plan, one to three measurable goals, a description of the population to be served, a proposed budget, performance targets, and a monitoring plan to the Project Manager. A selected school could receive up to \$3,000 for coordinating the partnering activities and up to \$11,000 to purchase supplies and materials to support the partnership. Partner leadership teams would be given software to record student participation; information would be uploaded to the Project Manager for analysis and reform as indicated. Descriptions of coherent and sustainable partnerships, while suggested, are not included. Educational results that align with and support the RTTT-District proposal and specifics regarding tracking indicators, targeting resources, improving results, and scaling the model to other high-need students were not included. This would be a function of the funded partnerships. The applicant does not describe how education and other services would be integrated or how the partnership would build staff capacity to assess student and school needs; create a process for selecting, implementing, and evaluating supports; engaging parents and families; and assessing progress to maximize impact and resolve challenges.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not meet Absolute Priority One, Personalized Learning Environments. To meet this priority, an applicant must coherently and comprehensively address how it 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 or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The core educational assurance areas are (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools.

The central focus of this proposal is to implement and expand eCLASS, an online content, learning, assessment, and support system that would provide teachers, students, and parents with digital content and information about students and their progress. The online system would help teachers know more about their students (past results, current level of learning, areas of strength and weakness) and provide them with easy access to instructional practices that could be tailored to meet students' learning needs. Teachers would be able to share strategies with one another in an online format and, along with students and parents, have 24x7 access to the digital resources. While this is a laudable endeavor, it cannot be equated to a learning environment. It is rather a sophisticated data system that would provide information and resources to students, educators, and parents. The system only serves students and educators in grades 5-12 language arts and mathematics; there appears to be no intention to expand the project to other grades and content areas. The applicant does not discuss how teaching and learning in other content areas might be affected and does not provide a

picture of the role of the mathematics or language arts teacher in this technology-dependent environment. It is unknown whether and to what extent eCLASS would accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. Professional development centered around eCLASS for 5-12 mathematics and language arts teachers is an integral part of the proposal. However, recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals district-wide, especially where they are needed most, is not addressed by the applicant. Strategies for turning around lowest-achieving schools are not apparent in the proposal.

The proposal appears to be a "tail wagging the dog" approach to creating a personalized learning environment. The District is to be commended for visualizing and creating eCLASS and for its endeavors to improve and expand its capabilities. However, while eCLASS appears to be a viable tool to support individualized learning, it does not comprise a coherent, comprehensive education system that embraces personalized teaching and learning for all students.

Total	210	130
--------------	------------	------------

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has applied for additional funding beyond the applicable maximum level provided to expand the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Targeted Educational Program (STEP) to two additional school clusters. The STEP Academy is a STEM-focused accelerated instructional program designed to serve over-age 8th grade students at risk of dropping out of school in an accelerated, individualized program involving student choice of areas of career focus. A pilot program was developed based on identified need within the district. In the 2010-2011 school year, about eighty over-age, at-risk students were identified. Eighty-four percent or sixth-two of them completed the STEP program. Of these students, 94% or 58 students entered high school in the fall of 2012 as sophomores. Based on the results of the pilot, the program was expanded to two additional middle schools using Georgia's RTTT Innovation Fund. The District estimates that for the 2012-2013 school year approximately 1,781 over-age seventh graders could be at risk of not graduating with their peers if the program is not sustained and expanded. The proposed expansion would allow a minimum of eighty eighth graders in each targeted school cluster to participate in the STEP Academy. The proposal includes a comprehensive implementation plan including professional development for teachers and parent involvement. Extensive teacher support would be provided to teachers working with these at-risk students. School clusters would be selected to participate based on the number of over-age seventh graders at risk of dropping out or not graduating on time. The applicant proposes very rigorous goals for the project, presents a compelling rationale for STEP, and proposes an agenda that accelerates course work, incorporates skill development and career planning, and partners with Gwinnett Technical College to expose enrollees to field experiences and a dual-enrollment course. The program allows participants to catch up with their peers and begin a career path. In addition to a diploma, participating students could receive industry certification or college credit in a critical-need field. There is no plan included for replicating the program over two or more LEAs. The proposed budget for this supplement and the extent to which the proposed budget would be adequate to support the development and implementation of activities that meet the requirements of this notice, including the reasonableness of the costs in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the proposed project activities and the number of students to be served were not found.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0343GA-3 for Gwinnett County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (A)(1) – Vision: Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided the following information for this selection criteria:

- The applicant provided a rationale for the four core assurances
- The applicant specific information related to an Interoperable data system
- The applicant shared an ambitious plan to support students and initiated the discussion around scaling-up the plan. The technology aspect of the plan shared pertained to some students receive technology and giving others students an opportunity to bring their own technology to school. The thinking behind this plan is to ensure that all students would have access to integrating technology with the curriculum. Although ambitious, this plan may lead to increased variability among the students and ultimately among curriculum access
- The applicant incorporated the four core educational assurance areas. However, the information shared regarding the student/parent stakeholder section was not explicit nor did it provide detailed methods outlining various opportunities for involving families in this process
- The applicant also spoke to the importance of having effective teachers and principals and an evaluation system currently in place but, mentioned that it was especially important in low-performing schools. This led the reader to question if this is the expectation for all schools
- The vision in this selection criteria did not explicitly share the impact of the plan for the subgroups

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the medium range for this section.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
--	-----------	----------

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (A)(2) – Vision: Applicant’s approach to implementation.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District explicitly provided the criteria that they used to identify the schools that would be a part of the reform proposal. The applicant shared the three criteria for this selection below:

- (a) The applicant clearly provided the five tenets used in identifying the participating schools that were selected. The schools selected clearly met the criteria outlined by RTT
- (b) The applicant listed all of the schools that were selected and they clearly met the set criteria. The list included the FARMS rate, name of principal and cluster, number of participants per school, and the number of participants from each school who receive FARMS

- (c) The applicant detailed information regarding the number of participating students who have been identified as high need and low-income. The applicant also shared the number of participating educators per school

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section. The applicant criterion used by the selected school panel to identify the participants. The upgrade would be to share the involvement of parent and community stakeholders in this selection process.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (A)(3) – Vision: LEA-wide reform and change.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District convincingly shared evidence of their plan describing how the reform proposal would be scaled-up, support district-wide change, and reach outcome goals.

- The applicant explicitly shared how the district has a record of recognition for various reform efforts including, narrowing the achievement gap in reading between African American and Hispanic subgroups with White subgroups, recognition for an effective evaluation system and execution of programs with fidelity
- The applicant presented a comprehensive plan reflecting the short-term outcomes, long-term outcomes, resources needed, and how the plan would be scaled-up to transcend the schools previously identified.
- The applicant identified specific criteria that would be used to determine if the schools and systems, which would eventually partake, are actually reaching their goal outcomes.

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section. The applicant did an excellent job providing a visual model explaining the *Enhanced Personalized Learning Theory of Change*. The information support the plan in the chart was thorough and reasonable and the timetable provided to scale-up the project was manageable.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (A)(4) – Vision: LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided information regarding a plan for improved student outcomes that highlighted ambitious yet achievable annual goals. The following provides information for the selection criteria:

- The applicant provided specific information pertaining to the summative assessments that would be analyzed to assess the current and future proficiency status. The applicant demonstrated this projected growth for all subgroups with a focus in English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities via the use of standard deviations, as a result, of the assessments changing over the life of the grant. Although the SD was explained, it may need more of an explicit quantitative value that is accessible to all stakeholders
- The applicant’s projected graduation increase is too modest
- The applicant’s projected college enrollment is too modest and calculated from current NSC enrollment data.
- No data was provided for the postsecondary degree attainment

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the middle range for this section. The applicant failed to demonstrate how this program will impact the growth rate of graduation rate and increased college enrollment. Although, the applicant referred to current data to determine the four-year projection, the growth was stagnant and reflected limited ambition.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (B)(1) – Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform: Demonstrating a clear track record of success.</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District shared some evidence that reflected a record of growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) The applicant provided a limited amount of information pertaining to the achievement gaps and student growth. The applicant only shared specific data from the grade 5 CRCT standardized assessments for African American and Hispanic students in reading. the data reflecting the graduation rate reflected a decline in the graduation rate • (b) The system identified the lowest achieving schools, identified by the state, and established an ambitious monitoring plan. The system took it a step further and identified eight additional schools they deemed as low performing. They applied stringent monitoring to ensure that teachers and students received increased support. The applicant needs to provide more specific details outlining exactly what explicit steps the system took to support all of the targeted schools • (c) The applicant outlined exactly how information would be shared with parent/family, staff, and public stakeholders <p>Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the lower-high range for this section.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (B)(2) – Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform: Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District meets the all requirements as defined by Selection Criteria (B)(2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant shared that all salaries and expenditures are shared with the public on the district’s website • Two public budget meetings per year <p>Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (B)(3) – Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform: State context for implementation.</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided evidence that demonstrates they can execute the expansion of personalized learning environments in their district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant, in conjunction with the board, created a <i>Theory of Action</i> that provided the district with increased flexibility. The increased flexibility lends itself to increased autonomy. These actions result in meeting the needs of individual schools by the provisioning of differentiated support 		

- The applicant clearly established the deliverables appropriately matched to the four core assurances. The deliverables for the fourth assurance did not explicitly share the steps taken to turn around low achieving schools. More information would have added to the assurance goal outcome

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the medium range for this section.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (B)(4) – Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform: Stakeholder engagement and support.

The Springdale School District met the benchmark for this Selection Criteria.

- The applicant shared the process used when introducing the project and varied stakeholder involvement. All key stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback
- The applicant shared letter endorsing the project. There were 13 letters of support
- The applicant explicitly shared that the district does not have collective bargaining. As a result, 94% of teachers who were surveyed, supported the proposal

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section. The system also shared the information with the Gwinnett Daily Post.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
---	----------	----------

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (B)(5) – Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform: Analysis of needs and gaps.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided a reflection on the possible needs/gaps of the proposal.

- The applicant shared specific information pertaining to the steps already taken to create personalized learning environments. However, the applicant neglected to add information describing the current outcome for one of the current processes in place: Technology and Digital Media Studio classes in high schools
- The applicant noted the importance of using student data as a requirement for determining Personal Learning Environments
- The district formed teams charged with analyzing the identified goal and monitoring the outcome of the goals

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the medium range for this section. The applicant would benefit from providing a more detailed analysis and reflection of the plan.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (C)(1) – Learning: An approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided a detailed plan and approach that thoroughly supported all tenets outlined in the *Learning* selection criteria.

- The applicant provided a detailed framework of the project deliverables that addressed the proposed goals of the program/project
- The applicant explicitly shared how parents, students, teachers, and administrators would be actively involved in the training and learning process
- The applicant shared how parent stakeholders are an integral part of the success of this program
- The applicant shared exactly how the technology plan is integrated into the curriculum and how it will meet the needs of individualized learners and their learning styles
- The applicant did not share specific information related to the specific steps taken to close the achievement gap
- The applicant speaks explicitly to preparing students for career and college readiness

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section. They clearly established an innovative plan to personalize the leaning environment for all students.

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (C)(2) –Teaching and Leading: An approach to teaching and leading that helps educators (as defined in this notice) to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice) by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District conveyed how the plan will supported all tenets outlined in the *Learning* selection criteria.

- The applicant established a high-quality plan that explicitly shared the deliverables from the four assurances
- The applicant shared how the timeline related to the rollout of staff development support for the teachers implementing the program
- The applicant needed to provide an explicit training plan and timeline to support the professional development and professional learning communities

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District identified and provided details as it relates to all of the tenets. As a result the score is in the medium range. However, a suggested upgrade is to provide more detailed information related to the “tools” teachers will have in order to meet the needs of students’ personal learning environments.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (D)(1) –LEA practices, policies, and rules: The extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator (as defined in this notice), and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District conveyed information outlined in this selection criterion.

- The applicant provided the leadership framework that is currently in place in Gwinnett County Public Schools. The infrastructure supports the plan identified in this application
- Schools have a level of autonomy related to:
 - Hiring
 - Differentiating to meet the needs of students
 - Program delivery models, etc
- The district does not yet have the opportunity for students to earn credits based on demonstrated mastery. However, the district is considering increasing opportunities to offer this option to all students, as needed

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the higher range on this section. The applicant needed to provide more information on the delivery model of the plan for SWD and ELL subgroups.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (D)(2): LEA practices, policies, and rules: The LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning.

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District conveyed a plan that would support the infrastructure of proposal.

- The applicant identified pathways needed to create a viable personalized learning environment. The various opportunities that parents will have to be an integral part of their child’s school program
- The district clearly has an expansive technology infrastructure in place and the scaling-up plan will enhance student the students’ opportunity for an enhanced individual learning environment
- The stakeholder involvement is evident
- The local school Technology Team is in place to strategically provide support to schools and school teams

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the higher range on this section.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Selection Criteria (E)(1) – Continuous improvement process

The Gwinnett County Public Schools District conveyed a plan that would support the tenets outlined in this selection criterion.

- The applicant shared the roles and responsibilities of specific councils to support the continuous improvement process. The following shared were:
 - Management Council
 - Advisory Council
- The applicant shared the deliverables for the four assurances outlined in the plan
- The applicant neglected to incorporate enough detailed information sharing how the plan is monitored, measured, and communicated to the public

Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the higher range on this section.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (E)(2) – Continuous improvement process</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District established a comprehensive plan to strategically share information with the public on an ongoing basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant identified multiple measures to share information with all of the stakeholders • The applicant shared an explicit chart with an embedded timeline <p>Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the high range for this section. No upgrades needed.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (E)(3) – Continuous improvement process</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided explicit information for this section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant had the accurate number of performance measures. All of the measure were explicitly aligned to the plan • Although, the applicant shared earlier in the plan that the data would be shared using standard deviation (SD). The data that was actually shared in the projected performance measures were confusing based on the fact that some data was shared via SD and some via percentage gains. One mode of data share should be used. • The applicant provided a rationale for each performance measure • The applicant did not provide projected data for some of the performance goal areas <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District did not meet all parameters of this section. The applicant scored in the middle range for the selection criteria.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (E)(4) – Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant established opportunities to identify ways to determine the effectiveness of the plan and identified how feedback would be used to monitor the success or to determine if various upgrades are needed • The applicant did not establish the funds that would be used to scale-up the plan to ensure long-term sustainability. • Additional, specific information is needed to provide a more detailed picture of how the staff, time, and funds are being used productively. <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District met some parameters of this section. The applicant scored in the middle range for the selection criteria.</p>		

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>Selection Criteria (F)(1) – Budget for the project</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided information for this section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant shared four specific projects directly associated with the plan. Three out of four of the projects supported students in creating a personalized learning environment. The final project is focused on managing the data and day-to-day operations. • The contractual section of the budget needs increased explanation regarding the expectations and parameters • The applicant should provide an increased rationale for each line item <p>Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided scored in the medium high range for this section</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Selection Criteria (F)(2) – Sustainability of the project</p> <p>The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided convoluted information pertaining to sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant shared that sustainability will be developed through effective partnerships • The applicant stated that additional information was shared in section XI in the application. However, explicit sustainability data was not clearly conveyed <p>Overall, the Gwinnett County Public Schools District scored in the low range for this section. Although the applicant did not explicitly share how the plan is sustainable, the reader could make a clear connection between the need of the funding to catapult this program and various opportunities to scale the plan up and make it sustainable over time.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Competitive Preference Priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gwinnett County Public Schools District provided some information regarding various partnerships and the impact of those partnerships on enhancing personalized learning environments • The integration of activities, via the partners, into the schools • The applicant shared the role of advisory boards on monitoring the effectiveness of these partnerships • Data will be collected on the effectiveness of the plan 		

The applicant shared that the targeted population was not established due to the competitiveness of the mini-grant. The open-endedness of this thinking may lend itself to increased variability and a lack of focus on the targeted subgroups.

The applicant did not establish specific performance measures for the Competitive Preference Priority

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant conveyed clear ideas as it related to their reform. There goals were viable and would lend themselves to increase student achievement and propel students toward college and career readiness. However, the applicant neglected to incorporate some key components related to current status regarding student achievement in the critical areas. They also failed to provide clarity related to sustainability past the term of the grant. The applicant did not provide enough information related to the rationale per expenditure.

The partnerships were established and shared but, the integration of the partnerships were not apparent.

Total	210	161
--------------	------------	------------

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The proposed plan for the Operational Budget Supplement is directly in alignment with the applicant's proposal.

- The plan focuses on College and Career Readiness
- The annual goals are ambitious and explicitly shared
- This budget will scale-up the already existing STEP Program

The criteria was met and the proposed budget is appropriate.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0343GA-4 for Gwinnett County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, aligning with the Race To the Top core assurances. Collaborative goal-setting addresses each core area, with annual targets that support personalized learning. Enhanced personalized learning goals include improving effective teachers and leaders, college and career ready improvement, and academic goals. The plan's vision is based on instructional strategies that are data-driven, and consideration to student interest and strength.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>A planning team has been selected and is made up of district division leaders. Based on recommendations from this development team, 34 schools have been selected to participate in the grant.</i></p> <p><i>The selection process was based on student performance, socio-economics and diversity. The district's overall free and reduced lunch count is 55%, exceeding the 40% requirement. District principals made recommendations for inclusion in the grant based on leadership effectiveness.</i></p> <p><i>Participating schools are listed, along with each school's raw data overall and by subgroup. Over 25,000 students will participate in the grant.</i></p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has designed a high-quality strategic plan, with tools and techniques specific to scaled up reform. The initiative results will have impact on whole-district reform, with components made available to all district schools as they are developed and implemented.</p> <p>The applicant provides a timeline listing project deliverables, proposing dates within grant initiative and beyond. Initiative results will be used to improve teacher effectiveness, college and career-ready curriculum, and graduation rates.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Content-specific strategies focus on continued academic improvement, with goals that meet or exceed requirements. Revised criterion reference tests and end-of-course tests are aligned with Common Core Standards and will be implemented during the grant term.</p>		

Established growth rates are defined for subgroups and overall participation, providing baseline data and goal expectation. Gap closure rates are specific to subgroups and reflect improved expectations for each group. Five years of actual data was used to calculate graduation rates, which include subgroup trends. The combined data has been used to project an increase in graduation rates with gradual improvement year by year. College enrollment goals have been calculated using actual data from 2008-2011. Postsecondary degree attainment is optional and has not been included in the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides achievement data for the past four years, listing the percentage of students that meet or exceed goals. Accomplishment data is given, showing success in the number of scholarship awards, academic improvements and graduation and college enrollment. Information on closing the achievement gap is limited, more details are needed.</p> <p>School improvement plans have been designed for consistently low-performing schools with a focus on designated Title I schools. Targeted goals are based on student achievement data, determining areas that need improvement. This collaborative process includes teachers, students, parents and community leaders, with performance data available to all stakeholders. Performance and accountability reports are available on the district's web site, also providing resources that inform and improve services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Yearly school allocations follow state requirements, whereby the formula is based on student enrollment.</p> <p>Local schools develop a budget based on staff, instructional delivery models, and student achievement. This plan is presented to the Local School Council, before it is sent to the district. Public budget reviews are presented at district and area board meetings, where opportunities are provided for public input. The documents are available on the district's website along with salary schedules for teachers, administration and classified personnel.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district has adopted its <u>Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Achievement</u>, where flexibility is given according to school achievement success.</p> <p>A school legislation bill was passed in 2008 that increased flexibility in return for increased accountability.</p> <p>The schools are using this flexibility to close student achievement gaps through targeted personalized instruction.</p>		

Common Core standards and assessments have been adopted, creating clear pathways toward meeting goals. Sophisticated data systems are managed centrally, providing tools and data that assist with personalizing student achievement.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The development of the proposal included administration, teachers and staff, parents, and community leaders. The district does not have a collective bargaining organization, therefore teachers from each participating school were included in discussions and voting procedures. Faculty support met the 70% requirement necessary for grant participation.

Proposal information has been provided through newspapers, public meetings, and the district website. The applicant provides multiple letters of support from community members, businesses, and government leaders, who are committed to collaborating with the district on this project.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district's project framework provides essential components required for successful personalized learning.

Goals and outcomes align with RTT-District requirements. The expansion of existing technology is proposed to aid in data collection of student needs and strengths. The programs will track progress and effectiveness, with data analyses focused on closing learning gaps.

The proposal includes professional development, designed to meet individual academic and school-wide needs. A timeline outlines goals, population to be included, implementation baselines and descriptions.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district's eCLASS system is a comprehensive technology-based learning management system, and has been designed to provide the means to share data, record instruction recommendations and strategies, and will be made available to students, parents, teachers, administration, and the community.</p> <p>The students electronic profiles will be updated based on interests, and academic achievement. Assisting in the development of goals, opening learning pathways leading toward college and career-readiness. The technology systems include a means to share data with students and parents in a timely manner.</p> <p>Extensive professional development will be provided, assisting with implementation of student engagement strategies, parent involvement, and academic goals. More information is needed as to how the plan will accommodate high-need students.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides for the identification of two teacher leaders per school who will focus on grant goals. The teacher leaders will be identified using student achievement evidence, credibility with staff and associates, and committed to assisting colleagues with innovation implementation.</p> <p>Improved teacher evaluations will incorporate observation, peer review and assistance in improved instructional practices.</p> <p>Key project deliverables are outlined with activities and instruction aligned to personalizing learning.</p> <p>More information is needed to describe teacher tools" and how they will be used to improve achievement.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Current district office structures and services support schools participating in the grant. The infrastructure is in place and will support project functions during the grant and beyond the grant timelines.</p> <p>Schools will have flexibility in making site decisions, allowing site-based scheduling, parent involvement, and local school budgets.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery through measurement tools rather than seat-time.</p> <p>Learning resources and instructional practices will be adapted for high-need students. The students will have the same access to texts and supporting materials, with additional support made available according to their individual needs.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan describes a history of equitable access to students regardless of socio-economic status, stating that all stakeholders have access to content, tools, and learning resources.</p> <p>Technology support is provided by the local school technology teams, media specialists and technicians. High-need students with IEP's (Individual Education Plans) will be given appropriate levels of technical support, providing adaptations to software and hardware as required by the special education department.</p>		

The project design establishes a need to improve the eCLASS system currently in use by the district. Tracking information for students, parents, and personnel will build on current programs, building on eCLASS program.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This personalized learning project will hire a Project Manager, whose duties and responsibilities include planning and managing daily operations, collecting data, and maintaining communication to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Project goals will be monitored, allowing for ongoing revision of the plan, evaluation of student progress and deliverable timelines.</p> <p>The adoption of standards and assessments will better prepare students for college and career success. More information is needed in describing the standards and assessments.</p> <p>The local school plans for improvement are required by the district each year, outlining goals and progress for students and teachers as they implement a rigorous curriculum for improvement. The intent to turn around low-performing schools is supported through instructional resources, professional development and interventions, which aid student performance.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan is high-quality, including an understanding of the need for ongoing revisions and adjustments. It has proded strategies for communicating updated information throughout the district community involving media, print and meeting based communication. Board reports, social media (webposts, blogs and email) are used as a means of ongoing communication to all stakeholders. The communication strategies take into account the availability of each media to stakeholders.</p> <p>The applicant provides a table outlining population, strategy and possible vehicles for communication to best meet the needs of students, teachers, parents and the community.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Performance measures are ambitious and achievable.</p> <p>The proposal identifies annual targets currently available, providing a baseline, description, rationale and comments. The measures include teacher and leader effectiveness, teacher attendance, tracking of college and career readiness, as well as academic indicators.</p>		

The applicant also proposes measures to be developed, providing implementation and performance effects. Charts are provided for each measure, indicating baseline, subgroup and overall performance with yearly target goals.

Multiple charts describe performance measures specific to age groups and subgroups. The information has been presented in a concise manner, describing the performance measure, rationale and comments.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to partner with a local university to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Formative and summative assessments will be implemented with ongoing results shared in summarized reports. The reports will provide information allowing ongoing feedback and implementation adjustments.

Through the university partnership, comprehensive and timely information will be shared, enabling the district to make adjustments where needed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a comprehensive budget where all funds are identified. District funded costs are itemized separately, showing funding sources, descriptors and total costs. An overall budget summary narrative using grant funds is reasonable and sufficient, addressing each budget item by category.

Multiple tables identify specific budget items by yearly and overall timetables. The plan has presented its rationale for investments and priorities.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
---	-----------	----------

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to solicit support from school and community foundations to sustain the program's costs beyond the grant years.

More support information is needed in order to show sustainability after the term of the project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes established partnerships that have been developed based on student and community needs.</p> <p>The planning team survey results indicate area schools have unique needs and interests, using the information to make recommendations as to developing effective partnerships.</p> <p>Leadership teams will oversee implementation and evaluations, ensuring that individual needs are met and improvement documented.</p> <p>Partnership activities that are currently active include tutoring, leadership development, recreational activities and music programs.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has proposed a coherent plan throughout the document, which has been designed to support the goals of personalized learning.</p> <p>The plan includes data analysis, implementation strategies, teacher improvement, and academic goals that are imperative to decreasing achievement gaps.</p>		

Total	210	151
--------------	------------	------------