



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0408GA-1 for Haralson County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a comprehensive and coherent vision of how three major proposed innovative practices will build upon its work in the four core educational assurance areas in order to provide personalized instruction in all of the districts schools and in the wider community. These practices include (a) wireless internet access in the schools and available to the community through a free, family-ready internet service, (b) a Lifetime Learning Academy modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone Employment and Technology Center, and (c) an Individual Learning Plan that provides every student with an electronic portfolio of their school history.</p> <p>Wireless internet access in every school, for every student, and available to the community as a whole will ensure that all students will be able to access their curriculum at anytime. It will support the blended learning initiative at the district's high school, providing teachers with the ability to maximize and personalize the learning environment. The Lifetime Learning Academy will provide students, parents, and community members with free access to academic and career training after school hours. The Individual Learning Plan will provide every student with an electronic portfolio of their school history and will contain data on all aspects of a student's educational career.</p> <p>The application describes a clear and credible approach to accomplishing these three practices.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district proposes to include all of its schools in this project. The process used to make this decision is not described other than to indicate that the district's concerns with graduation rates led to this decision. The free and reduced lunch rates are all over 50%. The schools and their enrollments are listed. All educators in these schools will participate in the project.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district states that all schools and students enrolled in these schools will participate in the project. The application does, however, describe a high-quality plan that will support meaningful reform in the district, including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. Data teams have been established to look at benchmark assessment results, grades, performance assessments, and progress monitoring. Individual learning plans will be provided for every student, PreK-12. The Lifetime Learning Academy will create opportunities for secondary students to identify and pursue areas of personal academic interest. The district will also pursue opportunities for other school and state leaders to visit this academy and replicate or adapt the concept to other communities.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides tables that describe ambitious performance goals on the State assessments. Goals are provided for all subjects tested as well as end of course tests in high school. Goals are provided for three subgroups: white, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Some of the goals for students with disabilities for some grades and subjects appear difficult to achieve, e.g., in grade 5 reading, the goal for students with disabilities is to increase from 61% meeting or exceeding standards in 2011-2012 to over 84% in 2012-2013. The tables describing goals for reducing achievement gaps for each subgroup also seem reasonable except for the students with</p>		

disabilities. Clearly the district is seriously committed to virtually removing the achievement gaps among all subgroups.

The districts goals for both graduation rates and college enrollment rates appear ambitious and achievable.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>With the exception of math in one of the primary (K-3) schools and reading/ELA in the high school, the district has had a consistent record of success in improving student performance on the state assessments, including a small increase in its graduation rates (college enrollment had not been tracked in previous years).</p> <p>The district provides modest evidence in this section that it has achieved significant reforms in its low-performing schools. It has helped three of the four schools that were in need of improvement demonstrate AYP in 2011. More significant reforms have been instituted in the remaining low-performing school (the high school), including replacing and adding staff and providing targeted professional development. However, in a later section (B(5)) the district describes in detail the innovations that is already has in place: 4-day school week, school and grade level data teams, performance-based assessments, and a one-to-one technology initiative at the high school.</p> <p>The district provides some evidence that it has made student performance data available to students, educators, and parents through a web-based data management system (Performance Matters) and the statewide longitudinal data system. But it does not describe how this is done.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides ample evidence of transparency in making school expenditures available to the public through the Open Georgia website, public board of education meetings, and its local eBoard website. The Open Georgia website contains the district's Transparency in Government Act report to auditors and the district's annual financial budgets and expenditures.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has provided a great deal of information about local education governance structures, present and future, that indicate the kind of conditions and autonomy needed to implement its proposal. The district has applied to be a charter school system and is moving toward implementing School Governance Teams that, alongside the School Councils, will provide advice and recommendations to school and district administrators.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a thorough description of an extensive effort to engage students, parents, teachers, and administrators from its schools in the development of tis proposal. There is no indication of whether or not there is collective bargaining. However, the response refers to a survey of school teachers and staff in which over 70 percent of all teachers supported the proposal and its several initiatives. Letters of support from a variety of community stakeholders are attached.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a comprehensive description of how it plans to analyze the needs of students and the needs</p>		

for strategies to implement personalized learning environments, including blended learning and online instructional options, flexibility in scheduling and requirements for remedial and accelerated courses, changes in graduation requirements, increased collaboration between post-secondary and community opportunities, and increased technology integration at all grade levels.

The application also provides a detailed explanation of how current and proposed strategies will be used to address those needs. The district provides a complete plan for its analysis of needs and gaps, including needs assessment surveys and engaging all stakeholders in the strategic planning process. The application also refers to monitoring the performance of subgroups through a web-based data management system, called Performance Matters, as well as the state's longitudinal data system.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has described a detailed, comprehensive, and coherent plan for improving learning and teaching. This plan explains how Individual Learning Plans and a Lifetime Learning Academy will be developed to provide students (and other lifelong learners) with personalized learning environments to help students pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The response explains how internet access, a variety of electronic tools, and teaming with local business partners will provide access and exposure to diversity and deepen learning through solving real life problems. It explains how teachers and other staff will advise students and parents in order to identify goals and steps to achieve those goals, and how data will be made available to track student progress toward those goals.</p> <p>Although the response does not explicitly address accommodations and strategies to provide high-need students with access to college- and career-ready standards, the description of how the Individual Learning Plans will work embraces all learners.</p> <p>The district has provided a summary of its narrative plan that identifies goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. In addition to developing software, purchasing hardware, contracting for internet access, this summary also identifies activities for training teachers, students, and others in the use of these systems.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a high-quality plan describing how the proposed learning strategies will require training, support, and professional development for teachers and leaders. Teachers will be provided professional development in integrating technology into their instruction. Their success will be monitored with a collaborative assessment system where teaching teams confer regularly to identify professional development needs and opportunities. The district will use the State's current leadership and teacher evaluation instruments to ensure that all students are being taught and supported by highly effective educators.</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>The district describes a governance structure that will provide support and services to each school through school leadership teams and the new School Governance Teams. The district also has applied to be a charter system which, if successful, will provide increased flexibility to design learning opportunities that are creative and innovative without having to seek specific waivers from the State. However, the district does not describe how the central office will be organized to provide support and services to participating schools.</p>		

The district indicates a strong interest in exploring alternative ways for students to earn credit and describes some possibilities.

Giving students different ways to demonstrate mastery is a very strong theme that runs throughout the proposal and is summarized in this section.

The district argues that blended and online learning opportunities described in its proposal will facilitate adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners.

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

The district makes a strong case for ensuring that all students, parents, educators, and other members of the community have access to the Lifelong Learning Academy and the availability ubiquitous access to the Academy. The application describes a partnership with community internet providers that will provide a county-wide, family-friendly wireless network to allow this access. The response to this criterion also describes a professional development center that would serve students, teachers, and community members.

The district also has anticipated the need for exportability of data to other systems, citing the incorporation of the Sharable Content Object Reference Model into the Lifelong Learning Academy, allowing the use of a variety of open source learning management systems and ensuring that student course work can be transferred to other systems. Finally, the district describes clearly its plans to promote the effective flow of information between systems, e.g., the School Interoperability Framework.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district presents a comprehensive, detailed plan for implementing the strategies proposed in the application. There is a concise table summarizing the major goals, activities, timelines, responsible parties, and deliverables for the project. The application includes a description of a number of elements and approaches that should lead to a successful continuous improvement process. It describes how the implementation of the activities will be monitored and how the impact of these activities on student achievement will be monitored through the schools' improvement plans. And the district will also monitor the grant's impact of student success in the work force through surveys, questionnaires, and meetings conducted by Career, Technical and Agricultural Center staff. Finally, the district lists the internal and external stakeholders that will be regularly informed of the project's progress.

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

The district provides a comprehensive discussion of a variety of methods it will use to communicate and engage with internal and external stakeholders. These methods include, the district's website, email, face-to-face meetings, print materials, and internal computer applications to view and monitor student data.

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

The district has proposed the required number and type of performance measures, It has explained the rationale for selecting those measures, how they provide leading information relevant to the implementation of its proposal, and how it will review and revise these measures if required. There are a two areas where questions remain. The lack of baseline data for all measures, while adequately explained, makes it difficult to judge the degree of their ambition and attainability. Also, the use of measures of "soft skills," while seeming to be appropriate does not match well with the areas of health and social-emotional development.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district presents an unusual approach to the evaluation of the effectiveness of its proposed strategies, based on the four educational assurance areas and sustainability. This approach describes more about what the proposed project will do to build on these areas and less on how it will determine the extent of its success. Other than a reference to examining student assessment results, evaluation methods for the other areas are not clearly described. The district does, however, describe a clear and comprehensive plan for continuous improvement in section E(1).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed budget and narrative identifies all funds that will support the project. These funds seem reasonable and sufficient to support the district's proposed initiatives. The narrative clearly describes the funds that will be used for one-time investments.

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

10	10
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district clearly and comprehensively describes a plan for the sustainability of the proposed initiatives, including expenses that are one-time investments, the sources of funding that will be used for ongoing expenses after the grant period ends. The wireless network infrastructure that will be set up with grant funds will be made available to private internet companies to provide low-cost internet services to people who want to pay for services beyond the family-friendly access provided by the school system. In exchange, these companies will pay utility, maintenance, and upgrade costs. The grant will pay for materials and equipment for renovating learning labs at the Lifetime Learning Academy. Once operational, additional purchases after the grant period will be made using revenues from student-led community ventures (e.g., print shop business in the graphics arts lab). The grant will pay for the purchase of computers for students and teachers. After the grant, the use of e-textbooks and curriculum will allow leveraging of textbook funds to replace computers that age out. Finally, three highly qualified positions funded by the grant will no longer be needed once the projects are fully functional and ongoing costs of professional learning will be covered through state professional learning funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The district describes clearly the anticipated partnerships it would pursue with Honda and health agencies. It is not clear, however, what the population-level desired results are. Descriptions of five desired results are presented and then four performance measures are described but not related to the desired results.

Although the district discusses how these measures would be tracked, it does not describe how it would use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students, develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students, or improve results over time.

Furthermore, there is no description of how the partnership would build the capacity of staff in participating schools.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a comprehensive and coherent vision of how three major proposed innovative practices will build upon its work in the four core educational assurance areas in order to provide personalized instruction in all of the districts schools and in the wider community. It describes a clear and credible approach to accomplishing these three practices and provides a plan that identifies goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.</p> <p>The district provides describes ambitious performance goals on the State assessments. Clearly the district is seriously committed to virtually removing the achievement gaps among all subgroups.</p> <p>The district provides a great deal of information about local education governance structures, present and future, that indicate the kind of conditions and autonomy needed to implement its proposal. It also provides a thorough description of an extensive effort to engage students, parents, teachers, and administrators from its schools in the development of tis proposal.</p>		
Total	210	175



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0408GA-2 for Haralson County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a detailed vision for reform.</p> <p>The applicant lists the following as the approach to goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blended learning • online instruction • 24 hour access to internet • more accessibility to teachers • Lifetime Learning Academy <p>The narrative provides a thoughtful description of the project. It addresses how the applicant plans to meet Common Core State Standards, its plan for providing technology and internet services to its stakeholders and their belief statements derived from the four core educational assurance areas. Furthermore the applicant explains the model for their plan of a Lifetime Learning Academy; its purpose and how it will affect the participating stakeholders of this competition.</p> <p>The applicant provides details of its Individual Learning Plans (ePortfolio) with an example of how this will support district-wide change and excel student achievement.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant's description of the process for selection was not clear. It appears that the applicant utilized general graduation rates as criteria for selection due to a sudden drop in graduation rates after a steady increase trend over several years. It is unclear if this was the sole criteria for selecting participating schools.

The applicant also mentions that all the participating schools are Title I schools; however, it is unclear if this was considered as criteria for selection of participating schools.

The applicant included charts with figures to demonstrate total number of participating students and a breakdown of those figures in the groups that were defined by this notice and it is referenced in this section.

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

The applicant presents high quality plan justified by a thorough description of reform by:

- examining state standard score; it appears the applicant utilizes this data as its starting point but not its sole measure for reaching goals such as benchmarks, standards-based grades, performance assessments and progress monitoring; this appears to be better indicators when personalizing learning per student.
- Data teams established since 2008; the applicant includes a description of how these teams have evolved and improved since 2008; this evidences the applicant's ability to scale up reform as it has already been occurring.
- Individual Learning Plans; the applicant provides details on the purpose, tracking and expected outcomes of the use of these plans
- Life Learning Academy; the applicant provides rationale that includes how the community will use the for the students reform and long term goals
- Career Pathway Advisor; this will enable the applicant to reach goals during and post grant as the Career Pathway Advisement will lead into careers and college for students beyond high school.
- Local and state data base; the applicant makes emphasis of how this information is made secure given its accessibility.

The applicant references the table that is included to provide a listing the plan's goals for specific targets beginning in 2011-2012 school year and continuing post grant to 2017.

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

The applicant provided thorough information in the narrative as well as on charts to demonstrate the ambitious yet achievable goals; for the most part gaining between 8 to 10 percentage points over the course of the grant and post grant and targeting the low-achieving sub-groups. The applicant makes mention in this application of the accreditation process through SACS/CASI as well as development of SMART Goals which indicate a continuous analysis and re-evaluation of the goals which will enable the closing of achievement gaps.

The applicant provides details of Professional Learning Communities that includes the frequency of their meetings and the purpose of the group. The purpose of the group is consistent with the vision of the applicants plan in personalizing student learning and working towards improving student achievement.

The tables referenced in the narrative provide the goals, activities, timelines, deliverable and responsible parties. It appears that all stakeholders are included as responsible parties which would enable to improvement of learning and meeting the goals set forth in this application.

The applicant provides documentation in the appendix as evidence of alignment to state indicators.

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents clear record of success over four years; evidenced in the charts provided. The applicant for the most part has data that demonstrates increases for the participating schools of up to 17 percentage points.

The data of one high school demonstrates a decrease of 3 to 5 percentage points however the applicant does address the decrease in the narrative and provides details of initiatives already in place.

The data for one elementary school shows a decrease however the applicant provides an explanation that the scores of the learners were attained elsewhere not at this school.

In the narrative, the applicant presents a plan that includes SMART goals with a description for each as well as initiatives for improving; this demonstrates the applicant's vision to plan, implement and execute its plan for reform. SMART goals help improve achievement by providing specific, timely attainment of realistic goals. It appears that implementation of SMART goals may be the factor affecting the success of the various schools over the past four years.

The applicant does not mention how the data made available is utilized to inform and improve participation, instruction and services; it is unclear what data is available and used by parents and students.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant evidences a high level of transparency by providing a thorough description of its processes, practices and investments. This was specifically evidenced in the applicant providing the URL for Open Georgia. Furthermore, the narrative describes in detail the followings:

- Annually reporting to TIGA auditors as require by Senate Bill 300
- Comprehensive Financial Report
- Monthly budget at public board of education meeting
- local eBoard
- monthly Board of Education meetings

The applicant refers to 2013 when the local school governance teams will also be involved in school budget decision making; this further supports the applicants plan for increasing its level of transparency.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states they are currently seeking charter school authorization from the state.

The applicant states engagement in site visits.

The applicant states it has been recognized by SACS/CASI.

The applicant states that the local board of education reviews every 2 years.

The applicant mentions the creation of their own School Council that consists of members that are representative of the stakeholders of the schools.

The procedures for pursuing charter school authorization appear to follow suit in regards to state, legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. The applicant has received accreditation through SACS/CASI which involves several visits from a compliance teams over time where the applicant demonstrated completion of specific benchmarks/targets. This is sufficient evidence.

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

10

9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides description of meetings conducted with stakeholders as well as the use of various surveys were utilized and examined; the narrative describes the purpose of these meetings and surveys which are to determine priorities areas for student learning. These priorities are consistent with the vision of this application. In addition, the applicant describes community goals as a part of this grant and provides an example.

The applicant provides letters of support in the appendix from various stakeholders but provided none from parents, parent

organizations, student organizations.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high quality plan as evidenced in a detailed narrative and charts.

The applicant states past, current and future measures to demonstrate their analysis of gaps and the plans to address these gaps such as Reading Endorsement coursework completed by staff, on-site cohort for Gifted endorsement. By seeking specific endorsements, the applicant demonstrates its ability to analyze current practices and focusing in on methods to better close the existing gaps.

The applicant states that surveys were utilized; a chart provides information gathered and includes goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. The data gathered from the surveys appear to have been utilized in creating the charts to demonstrate the high quality plan.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a very thorough and detailed narrative of a high-quality plan which addresses Absolute Priority 1.

The applicant mentions the following approaches as evidence for the various strategies such as one-to-one technology, tablets, Netbooks, Free internet home and school, online, flipped and blended instruction, Khan Academy, teacher created videos, hands-on experiences, and digital cloud. The variety of strategies would enable the applicant to personalize learning for students based on needs whether technology, academic, etc. The applicant describes that by utilizing modern technology students will be better trained when entering the work force or technology; this aligns with the plan's vision for reform as well as its ability to sustain post grant and possibly into the students' post-secondary careers.

The applicant's narrative provides a comparison of traditional practices as opposed to their plan and explains the real life connection that would impact the students for career and college. This aligns with the applicants vision as well as the implementation of Common Core State Standards which entails a lot of real world/real life connections. The applicant also provides examples of the impact technology would have on their students in society currently.

The applicant states that the student ILP becomes an Individual Graduation plan during middle school. It appears that these plans will allow students to tailor instruction to specific career and college goals with the assistance of their personal advisors; whereas their students would have a competitive edge over their peers in other schools not included in this grant.

The rationale provided support the applicants aim to target specific students' needs and to provide alternative methods of receiving the instruction as needed as well demonstrating mastery. This aligns with the applicants vision in providing personalized learning per student.

The applicant is also able to detail the impact these programs will have within the community and what appears to be long term impact on the community.

The applicant provides a chart with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties to support its plan.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The below mentioned strategies described in the narrative demonstrate a clear plan to personalize learning for each student. The applicants plan demonstrates that the students will have the support they need to reach college and/or career. It appears that by maintaining of the ILP plan appears to provide a digital snapshot of each student that will enable them to launch the college track or career choice that is appropriate thus increasing graduation rates and later successful, prepared adults for the work force in the community. The applicant explains the secure digital data can be utilized by prospective employers to provide jobs to qualified candidates based on the data. The following outline the applicants high quality plan of instructional strategies:

- each student receives their own career and college advisor
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is maintain in a secure digital program
- advisors meet regular with students to review ILP
- ILP transitions to Individual Graduation Plan in middle school
- students will create portfolio; example provided of student having website that contains targeted information on career interest, mastery and will assist in finding a job and entering college
- scaffolded approach to technology beginning in primary grades and increasing through high school
- teachers will mentor student learning communities which meet regularly

The above mentioned strategies described in the narrative demonstrate a clear plan to personalize learning for each student. The students will have the support they need to reach college and/or career. The maintaining of the ILP plan appears to provide a digital snapshot of each student that will enable them to launch the college track or career choice that is appropriate thus increasing graduation rates and later successful, prepared adults for the work force in the community. The applicant explains the secure digital data can be utilized by prospective employers to provide jobs to qualified candidates based on the data.

The applicant provides a high quality plan for training of teachers and staff evident in the following; these appear to allow the applicant to build capacity and maintain highly effective teachers for students:

- various opportunities and types of professional development proposed for teachers
- use of evaluation tool developed for RT3 competition
- participation in pilot of LKES and TKES
- collaborative assessment system to design and target specific professional development for teachers
- use of mentors from Georgia DOE district effectiveness program to develop strategic plans
- mentoring program for new staff to the schools
- training modules

The applicant does not address:

- training required for teachers who will be required to serve as student advisor; It is unclear if the teachers will have training in the specific career pathways for each students personalized learning.
- a plan for hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.
- training, tools, policies for school leaders/school leadership teams other than LKES and TKES

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a clear and detailed plan for organizing the LEA central office; method and process for making decisions, protocols for operation, procedures for managing funds, procurement process, etc. Although the applicant mentions site visit pertaining to their status towards charter school application it is unclear if the above mentioned are addressed.</p> <p>The applicant mentions "thinking outside of the box" but does not provide clear narrative of what this entails. The flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, etc. is not addressed in the narrative; mention of its current application to become charter does not substantiate clear autonomy of the school leadership teams in regards to this portion of the criteria.</p> <p>The applicant provides a chart with a brief description of the SGT and leadership teams role in goals and responsibilities however the chart does not successfully address the practices, policies and rules as specified in this section of the application and as defined in this notice.</p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient description of its autonomy is respect to providing opportunities to progress, earn credit and demonstrate mastery via alternative ways to earn credit, Carnegie Units, community projects, work based experiences, dual enrollment, Move On When Ready and Modules. These programs appear to be appropriate for personalizing learning per student. The applicant goes to further explain blended and online learning and use of software for students including those with disabilities and English Language Learners.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high quality plan for infrastructure evident in:

- Lifelong Learning Academy housed at high school and open to community
- plan for student to serve as teacher/trainer at the Lifelong Learning Academy
- current one to one computing initiative
- strong bring your own technology program with provisions to provide for families who cannot afford
- partnership to provide low cost internet access for families at home
- student provided trainings in software applications for community and teachers
- access to Google Apps and Gmail
- access to internet to county library card holders
- checkout of devices
- SCORM to transfer student developed work to other systems
- SLD, Georgia411, SIF, Powerschools
- Professional Development Center to be formed

The narrative provided for these provide support on how this will impact currently and the applicants plan for long term. The narrative provides specific examples.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a narrative and chart to evidence the high quality plan. The chart includes goal, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties; these details appear to demonstrate that the applicant will utilize feedback on a timely manner towards progress. The plan for involvement of the various educators and professionals appear to align with the vision.

The applicant will follow a Continuous Improvement Model (Plan, Do Check Act) and provides support in the narrative such as maintaining school improvement plans.

The applicant states monitoring will occur via (which appear to be sufficient evidence):

- stakeholder input
- surveys
- questionnaires
- face-to-face meetings

The applicant addresses their plan to publicly share information of its investments via (which are sufficient examples to evidence):

- Board of Education meetings
- faculty meetings
- website
- news media
- school councils
- Parent/Teacher organizations

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

The applicant provides multiple strategies for communication such as:

- school system website
- per school website
- eBoard

- email
- meetings
- PTO
- print materials
- The Rebel Report
- Balanced Score Card
- PowerSchools
- Performance Matters

The methods of communication appear to be of various formats and can be accessed by the various stakeholders thus ensuring that communication is continues and available to all without any barriers.

The applicants description of the improvements and alignment to accountability of the Balanced Score Card demonstrate the applicants ability to continuously improve the plan. The applicant explains this information address five goals and is publicly available to all stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ambitious yet achievable performance measures as evidenced in the charts provided. The targets are gradual over the course of the grant reaching up to 15-20 percentage points increases post grant which appear to be ambitious and achievable.

The applicant does not provide sufficient details in the narrative for the methodology for calculating the measure and it is not shown on the table.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a 5 part plan with a narrative for each of the five parts however the plan does not address how effectiveness will be measured specifically and evaluation of:

- professional development
- more productive use of time, staff, money or other resources
- working with community partners
- compensation reform
- modification of school schedules and structures

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides thorough narrative to support items in budget with thoughtful rationale. The table provides itemized descriptions as well as if it is one time cost or recurring cost.

The applicant describes its plan for continuing the internet services via contract lease agreements that appear to already have been negotiated through post grant as well as partnerships with local libraries however evidence of this contract was not included in the appendix.

Additionally, the applicant provides a chart detailing milestones, timelines, responsibility, evidence, resources and challenges to support the items listed in budget.

It is unclear however if the purchase or lease of local land mentioned in the narrative is included in the dollar amount listed for budget subpart 2. An indication of purchase price as opposed to recurring lease costs would create a deviation in the proposed budget.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is able to provide various sources of funding post-grant to sustain the plan that include local sales tax revenue, local and state funds, Title I, Title II, and Title IV-B.

The applicant also states lease agreements will be established to maintain the internet and technology aspects of the plan and to continue to provide low cost services to the community post grant. Evidence of the lease agreements was not provided in the appendix to further demonstrate the sustainability of the plan after the term of the grant. The cost to maintain the internet and technology aspects of this plan should be projected post-grant as these costs may or may not exceed the budget; these costs are critical to the sustainability of the plan.

The applicant has been able to provide support from the Mayors of two towns and what appears to be a strong commitment from Honda Lock; evidence of the commitment from Honda Lock was not provided in the appendix to further support this commitment.

The applicant also mentioned dissolving three positions by transferring the responsibilities to existing staff as well as students in the Lifetime Learning Academy afterschool; this will reallocate funds after the term of the grant that would decrease the budget thus the plan will sustain. A clear description of the reallocation of the funds was not described in the application.

Additionally, the applicant mentions a plan to implement student led ventures as a source for generating funds after the term of the grant; this aligns with the applicants' ability to demonstrate its innovativeness and plan to sustain post-grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is able to demonstrate an integration of public or private resources through a description of the collaboration with several private and public organizations including a partnership with Honda Lock. The plan indicates that Honda Lock employees would teach course at the high school and provide course credits towards an internship program for students. The applicant mentions expanding the dual enrollment already in place with West Georgia Technical College. The applicant state these opportunities in real-life situation would serve beneficial in accelerating all students (special populations as well). Although the applicant describes these partnerships the applicant utilizes verbiage of having a history of collaboration; it is therefore not clear if the collaboration has ended or is current and on-going with specifically two of the organizations, Honda Lock and West Georgia Technical College, as letters of support or commitment were not included in the appendix.

The applicants plan for the Lifelong Learning Academy appears to provide additional support not only to students but to the entire community.

The applicants proposed lease contract agreements will support Powerschools for continued tracking of data, use of programs and computer applications.

The applicant provides gradual yet achievable goals for performance measures; increase of approximately 20 percentage points over the course of the grant.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant consistently provides evidence of creating personalized learning environments for students.

This is evident in the narratives pertaining to:

Individual Learning Plan that transition into Individual Graduation Plan

- Lifelong Learning Academy
- various opportunities to earn credit, prove mastery
- availability to technology and internet
- current successful initiatives in place
- current application for charter schools
- elaborate plan for utilizing technology, software and data bases for tracking progress, implementing programs, specializing instruction
- career advisors for pathways
- scaffolded approach of technology from primary grades to high-school
- elaborate methods to evaluate
- SACS/CASI recognition
- Balanced Score Card

Total	210	186
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0408GA-3 for Haralson County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's reform vision was clearly focused on accelerating student achievement as provided in the evidence of the vision and mission statements, their belief statements, and their innovative ideas toward improving student learning. The district's reform vision was a comprehensive one that addressed the needs of students, educators, community members, and the integration of technology.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district explained that all schools will be participating in the proposal; however, the district did not clearly describe the selection process. All schools identified are classified as Title I schools but more information is needed regarding how the district decided to focus on Title I as opposed to other socioeconomic or demographic factors. Additionally, the educator evaluation systems will be fully in place in the 2013-2014 academic year. The details provided in the proposal provided the reader confidence that the proposal will have a chance to be successfully implemented. The district provided convincing information that key stakeholders were included in the proposal. These stakeholders ranged from local businesses, community partners, parents, and institutions of higher learning. The district also has a comprehensive plan to provide rigorous and relevant instruction that will positively impact the community at large.</p> <p>The weakness of this section was found in the lack of details describing the selection process for the schools as well as focusing mostly on graduation rates. While the district stated graduation rates are not the sole indicator of the health of a school, supporting details regarding the other indicators were not clearly provided as evidence.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided details of how the reform proposal could be scaled up and would meet its goals by providing evidence that a continuous improvement model is actively used to improve instruction and learning. The district has identified critical success factors, established annual learning goals, and determined the milestones that must be achieved in order to deliver on their proposal. Additionally, state and other local leaders would be able to observe the proposal and replicate their plan. The district has done a good job of operationally defining many of the items necessary for successfully implementing the proposal such as the specific progress monitoring data and assessments to be used. Finally, the district has an instructional system that utilizes data driven decision making and has experienced past success in improving student learning.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided evidence of ambitious goals in improving student learning, closing achievement gaps, and increasing college enrollment. Many of the lower performing groups had goals to make annual improvement at 10% or greater per year. One group, grade 5 students with disabilities was projected to make a 27% increase at the start of the proposal. The district provided convincing data that this was an ambitious goal. Based on the data, the reader concluded that while this was an ambitious proposal, it was achievable due to the high success rates of some student groups and the support the proposal has from district leadership. Additional evidence that this proposal was achievable can be found in the fact the district utilizes professional learning communities, academic coaches, and in the strong implementation of the district's continuous improvement model.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided clear evidence of individual schools having success in improving student learning and closing the achievement gap but was unable to provide college enrollment information as this had not been measured in the past. The district also addressed ambitious reforms for the lowest performing school where the entire administrative staff had been replaced, an academic coach had been hired, and data driven professional development had been implemented.</p> <p>The weakness of this section was the failure to address how data would be made available to parents. The district provided evidence in the narrative about how data would be made available to teachers and administrators through a web based program and that students would be keeping individual portfolios. The proposal did not address the process of how this data would be shared with the parents. Another weakness was the lack of a clear, operationally defined explanation of what a full educational picture means and the process that parents would use to access this information. This lack of parental information caused the reduction in points.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided specific examples of high levels of transparency through the use of web based access on the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, a report submitted annually to meet requirements of Georgia legislation, a report on the Georgia Department of Education website, at monthly updates of the public school board meetings, and on the school district website.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided ample evidence that is would be able to implement the proposal through a detailed description of how it currently operates within the legal and procedural guidelines required. The district had been recognized as a School Board of</p>		

Distinction. The district had also established School Councils at each school which serve as an advisory committee and provide input on the School Improvement Plan, policy and procedure, budget, extra-curricular activities, parent involvement, and academic progress. Furthermore, the district will implement a School Governance Team at each school to provide additional input in the local school daily operations and make recommendations to the school board.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district offered adequate evidence of involving all stakeholders in the development and support of the proposal. The district provided information about meetings with educators, staff members, parents, school board members, and community members to gather input into the development of the proposal as well as to gain support for the implementation of the proposal. The district also solicited input from local college and university educators and leaders and has the support of the local college and nearby University.

The weakness of this section can be found in the lack of a description of how students were engaged in the development of the proposal as well as a lack of evidence to support the statement that over 70% of the teachers supported the proposal and the lack of documentation that demonstrated support from parents or parent organizations.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district provided a high quality plan for the analysis of the goals described in the proposal. This plan included specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals, a feasible timeline that was not too cautious nor too bold, specific deliverables and who would be accountable for those deliverables. Currently the district has a solid approach toward data analysis using the four step Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle of continuous improvement. This cycle of improvement resulted in a detailed needs assessment that identified key areas of needed improvement. One area specifically addressed by the proposal is to increase the learning opportunities of students who must work to support their families and attempt to graduate from high school. Furthermore, the strong needs analysis and results described in the narrative support the requirements that the district utilize a robust continuous improvement plan.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district provided details that describe its high quality plan to provide students access to technical resources, improve instructional strategies, improve data management to a single sign-in system, allow teachers and students to personalize instruction through traditional courses as well as blended instruction, and provide students opportunities to master the curriculum content in order to be fully prepared to meet college and career readiness standards. This plan included specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals, a feasible timeline that was not too cautious nor too bold, specific deliverables and who would be accountable for those deliverables. Furthermore, the district was convincing in the description of their plan to implement their proposal as it sought out partnerships with a variety of community stakeholders and strives to meet the needs of the community as well the students.</p> <p>Overall, the plan to improve student learning is strong. Some of the more innovative strategies include the development of Individual Learning Plans which will be able to follow the students for their entire academic careers in the Pre-K-12 system and beyond as they enter college or the work force as well as the concept of providing free internet access to the entire community through partnerships with local internet providers. Another key feature and strength of this proposal is the idea that students will be able to demonstrate learning in a wide variety of ways, ranging from traditional pen and paper tests to work products that will help solve community problems in the real world. Finally, the reader found the proposal to be feasible, well-articulated, comprehensive in its scope, and highly likely to be successful in achieving its goals due to the support of key stakeholders and the local community.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides convincing information that it would be able to implement a proposal that would increase student learning and instructional practices. The information included a high quality plan to focus on college and career standards for all students; new evaluation systems that would provide formative data for teachers and administrators; and, professional development that would also have an assessment system and be able to deliver specific, needs based learning opportunities. The plan included specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals, a feasible timeline that was not too cautious nor too bold, specific deliverables and who would be accountable for those deliverables. Furthermore, the district proposal provided convincing evidence that there is a culture of continuous improvement already in place which will be able to support the implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>The weaknesses found in the proposal can be found in the lack of a description regarding the professional development needs of teachers who will become student advisors or mentors. This information is critical in order to maximize the advantages gained by utilizing an advisor with students.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a narrative that the central office was able to provide the necessary support to the schools involved in this proposal by stating the close working relationship had been previously established through the collaborative efforts in developing school improvement plans, professional development for school based leaders, and professional development for teachers and staff regarding any new initiative. Furthermore, the school leadership teams have the flexibility to establish academic calendars, school schedules, and school level budgets. Additionally, the district has an innovative approach to allow students to demonstrate learning through programs that would allow high school credit courses to be taken during middle school and allow students to demonstrate mastery using various learning styles.</p> <p>While the district provided details of what it can do to support the proposal, the weakness in this section was found in the lack of a clear explanation of the process regarding how the central office will provide the support necessary for this proposal to be successful. Additionally, the district did not offer an explanation of the process that would be used to adapt instruction to meet the unique needs of ELL and Students With Disabilities.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district described an innovative partnership with local community members to provide an internet network to ensure that all students would have access at any time to a blended learning environment. This environment would allow students to access high quality instruction and a curriculum that provides rigor and relevance. Furthermore, the district has a plan that will allow students, parents, and teachers an opportunity to improve their technical fluency through a professional learning center. Finally, the district has a plan that will allow students, parents, and educators to share data through a secure site.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district demonstrated an effective continuous improvement plan through the use of a four step improvement model using the Plan, Do, Check, Act process. Various aspects of the proposal will be monitored to ensure successful implementation and the continuous improvement plan will provide data that will enable leaders to make adjustments to ensure successful</p>		

implementation when necessary. Another innovative aspect of the proposal was the concept to measure the proposal's effect on student success in the work force using the continuous improvement plan.

The reader found the district plan for continuous improvement to be clear, well-articulated, and had specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals, a feasible timeline that was not too cautious nor too bold, specific deliverables and who would be accountable for those deliverables.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The district presented information that demonstrated the various ways the district maintained ongoing communication ranging from websites, email, printed materials, face to face meetings with various stakeholders, and through collaborative efforts with mass communication systems such as the local newspaper.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The district provided details of an achievable plan to improve student learning and performance however, it was not overly ambitious. While many of the performance measures are showing a baseline of 70% or greater, an ambitious and achievable increase would be expected to be a minimum of 5% increase. An example of this data and corresponding increase can be seen by the district on the SGP. When baseline data begins below 70%, an ambitious yet still achievable increase would be expected to demonstrate a 10% increase. The opportunity for the district to be this ambitious can be found in their Grade K-3 students with disabilities who are able to meet targets. The district's plan shows a 5% increase annually from 50% in 2012-2013 and ending with 70% in 2016-2017. The reader was not convinced that this was an ambitious annual learning gain. The fact the district did not demonstrate a willingness to make such ambitious gains early in the children's' academic careers was a weakness in this proposal. Additionally, the lack of baseline data made it difficult to evaluate the overall levels of success at being able to meet ambitious and achievable annual targets

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The district provided evidence of the development of a five part evaluation plan that would measure the critical success factors to the proposal's implementation. The parts of the evaluation plan included the use of rigorous standards and quality assessments, utilizing professional learning communities as a professional development model, supporting data systems that provide relevant and timely data to aid instructional decision making, utilizing a school within a school approach to help turn around the lowest performing school, and promoting collaboration between educators and community stakeholders. One example of this collaboration is the dedication to building a wireless internet infrastructure to allow students to individualize their instruction through blended classes. A major weakness of the plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities can be found in a lack of critical success factors. The district could have strengthened the proposal by including the indicators to measure success. While the evaluation plan was developed, it missed this critical step and led to a reduction in points.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The district clearly identified the funds that will be used to support the project, ranging from equipment to additional personnel to ensure the successful implementation of the project. The district also provided a strong rationale for the expenses as they relate to the success of the proposal. Overall, the budget appears to be reasonable and will provide the support necessary for the proposal to be successfully implemented.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides specific evidence of how the proposal will be sustained. Most of the expenses in implementing the proposal are one-time costs. The district also has financial support beyond the grant funding to help sustain the proposal. Furthermore, the district has secured the support of two town mayors from within the school district. Finally, the district has also devised a plan to sustain the daily operation of the proposal at the end of the grant funding through a reallocation of resources and other means such as the use of the student print shop to generate revenue and to allocate state professional development funds to continue to support the professional development needs of the proposal. The evidence provided indicates the district has the community support necessary to sustain this proposal beyond the grant cycle. The proposal could have been strengthened by clearly identifying how responsibilities would be reallocated to existing district and school leadership.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's strengths in this proposal were found in the evidence of a strong partnership with the local community, businesses, and nearby colleges and universities. Additional strengths were found in the narrative description of the Lifetime Learning Academy. This academy is an innovative idea that allows students to not only learn relevant 21st Century skills but to also serve the community as mentors and teachers as they share these skills through teaching the at risk populations in the community in classes for adults during after-school hours. Another strength can be found in the professional learning of the educators in the district. The district has a good understanding of the continuous improvement process and has utilized it to fully identify areas of concern, the root causes of those concerns, and has developed a highly specific, operationally defined plan to address those concerns. Finally, the expansion of the district's one-to-one technology program will allow all students to gain access to high quality instruction and curriculum in an individualized learning environment. Furthermore, the district did not identify more than 10 desired results, keeping within the requirements of the Competitive Preference Priority.</p> <p>The district's weakness was in the identification of ambitious yet achievable performance goals. In the areas of the weakest performance, student improvement gains would have been expected to be 10% or greater yet occasionally they were not. A specific example of this was found in the percentage of grade 8 students with disabilities increasing from a baseline score of 50% to 52.56% the next year. Another weakness was found in the establishment of ambitious goals that may not be achievable. There were a few examples of the district attempting to increase performance scores by over 20% in a single year. The reader was concerned that while this is an ambitious goal, it may not be achievable with grade 5 students with disabilities.</p> <p>A more realistic approach to improving student achievement may be to establish a minimum of 10% increases in student performance where the baseline data was fewer than 70% proficient and to establish a minimum of 5% up to 10% increase where the baseline data was greater than 70%. This increase in student growth would be ambitious yet still attainable.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall, the district met the requirements. There was ample evidence of improvements in instruction, leadership capacity, and student learning through a variety of methods ranging from the integration of technology to develop individual learning plans throughout the students' academic careers, the partnership with the local Technical College and University to provide students an opportunity to earn college credits through dual enrollment, credit for work through internship programs, and complete</p>		

access to quality instruction through a blended learning approach. The weaknesses found in the establishment of ambitious and attainable growth did not significantly detract from the district's ability to meet the Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	190
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