



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1095MS-1 for Jackson Public School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jackson Public Schools vision of reform is broad based and headed in the direction of improving teaching and learning, but does not build on the four core educational assurance areas to articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating achievement and increasing equity through “personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interest,” ro the reasons enumerated below.</li> <li>JPS describes a vision of reform with five major goals: Developing a Data-Driven, High-Reliability School District, Creating a High-Performance Cultures, Providing Whole-Child Student Supports to Ensure Well-Rounded Education, Ensuring Curricular Pathways to Success, and Guaranteeing Challenging, Engaging and Intentional Instruction. This vision maps to the four core educational assurances, and paints the picture of a school district that understands the general elements of improving learning and instruction, but does not convincingly present these as existing work on which to build an innovative approach to personalized learning. (The sense of these as continuing goals rather than existing work to build on is confirmed by the lack of evidence of a track record of success on the assurances in Section B.)</li> <li>Equally crucially, JPS’s application does not adequately articulate a “clear and credible approach” to addressing the goals of the grant to “accelerate” and “deepen” student learning “through personalized student support, grounded in common and individualized tasks based on student academic interest.”                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are a couple of references to “personalized learning experiences” within the vision as a whole, but without detail or development. Within the section on “Ensuring Curricular Pathways to Success” there is one reference to “pathways to allow credit based on successful demonstration of competency via examination or other valid means” and another to “improving teaching and learning through high-quality educational digital content and improving the use of technology to improve instruction,” but even these are not situated within any vision of how they would work within a comprehensive and coherent personalized learning environment.</li> <li>The vision presented overwhelmingly remains at the more general aspects of school improvement, as evidenced in their own summary of their proposal: “Our proposal asks that we be given the opportunity to use funds to carry out activities that will (i) support and complement our adoption of rigorous standards, the CCSS, and a high-quality assessment system, and support teachers in teaching to these standards; (ii) support a more effective use of data to identify school-level needs and improve student outcomes; (iii) improve our capacity and infrastructure at the district-level to support the effective use of technology to improve and inform instruction; (iv) coordinate with early learning programs to improve school readiness; and (v) carry out effective family and community engagement strategies.” While these are laudable and needed improvements, they do not constitute the innovative, dramatic transformation of the learning environment through personalized learning that the application is looking for.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JPS selected to use a whole-district approach to implementing their reform. This approach should in many ways positively support LEA- and school-level implementation, but also raising some risks.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By implementing in the whole district at once, JPS can more easily and quickly leverage change in policies, build momentum, and attempt a comprehensive approach to changing infrastructures and learning platforms/models.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		

- However, the demands of moving the whole district in a transformational direction will be substantial and may be difficult to meet. JPS does not address these risks (by, for instance, proposing implementation staged by school level or simply some percentage of schools in several phases). This puts some question over how feasible their implementation plan would be (discussed further in (A) (3)).

2. In terms of its responses to sub-criteria (a) – (c)

- (a) JPS does not describe the process they used to select participating schools, but given that they are including all the schools in the district, this is appropriate. They also do not present a description of why they decided to use a whole-district approach. JPS does provide appropriate evidence in their school demographics charts that the participating schools/the district meets the competition’s eligibility requirements (e.g. over 40% of students from low-income families, etc.).
- (b) and (c) JPS also meets the requirements of providing a list of the schools that will participate and the total number of participating students, those from low income families, those who are high needs, and participating educators.

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

10

4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. Since JPS’s proposal is being implemented district-wide for all students, all schools/students within the district are participating. Therefore the applicant does not have to address “how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.” The remainder of this criterion requires a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal “will help the applicant reach its outcome goals (e.g. the applicant’s logic model or theory of change of how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by the applicant.)”
2. JPS provides an adequate description of their logic model or theory of change, which focuses on developing a shared concept of “what our schools should be” based on proven effective practices, and then using the “collective impact” approach to collective action to drive change.
3. However, JPS does not provide a “high quality” plan for how their reform proposal will help them reach their desired outcomes. Their application does include some of the elements of a plan, as follows:
  - Goals: Met. The most explicit statement of the goals of their reform initiative are the five goals provided in the Vision section: Developing a Data-Driven, High-Reliability School District, Creating a High-Performance Cultures, Providing Whole-Child Student Supports to Ensure Well-Rounded Education, Ensuring Curricular Pathways to Success, and Guaranteeing Challenging, Engaging and Intentional Instruction. (As noted in Section A, however, these goals are not focused on the development of a personalized learning environment.)
  - Activities: Met partially. Each goals section includes statements about what the district will do toward that goal. While some of these statements usefully describe activities to be implemented (“we will publicize the key indicators of whether students and schools have effective teachers and principals,” “we will use robust data systems to gather information critical to determining how schools are progressing,” etc.), the majority of the statements have a more vague and aspirational quality (“we will expand instructional practices for which there is evidence of improving student performance,” “we will ask more from students, families, teachers, principals, and others in every level of the school district,” “we will... require teacher input in a problem-solving approach [to student intervention],” “our proposal will continue to help schools implement high-quality language instruction educational programs”). Many of the statements refer to an outcome (e.g. requiring teacher input to problem-solving) without an accompanying concrete activity to achieve the outcome (e.g. establishing student intervention teams with teacher representation).
  - Timelines: Not met. JPS does not provide timelines for the plans presented within their five goals
  - Deliverables: Not met. In general, JPS does not provide specific deliverables, because their “activity” statements are not requiring specific products.
  - Parties Responsible: Not met. Again, in general, JPS does not provide specific parties responsible, instead using “we” or “the district”
  - Overall Credibility: Not met. While the type of information within the goals text was appropriate for the Vision section within which it was provided, it is insufficiently concrete and specific to qualify as a “high quality” plan. Credibility as a plan is also undermined by the fact that there are no specific t allocations by goal or “activity” within the application budget.

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

10

2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. The JPS application does not meet this sub selection criterion to a significant extent.
  - o The application narrative omits section (A) (4) on LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes.
  - o The district includes some minimal documentation related to this sub- criterion in other areas of the application, as follows, however, it does not fulfill the requirements:
    - o For (a) performance on summative assessments - JPS includes in Section C brief state benchmark tables on percent of students, total and by sub-group, for Reading/ELA and Math performance goals, projected to 2017. However, these are provided for the LEA as a whole, not for each grade level tested.
 

The appendix also includes printouts from the state accountability system on ELA and math AMO performance goals for each of the 51 individual school in the district, for all students and for subgroups. There is no provision of LEA-wide goals based on grade groupings, or even whether the district has endorsed the school-by-school goals provided as their goals for the purposes of this grant
    - o For (b) decreasing achievement gaps - Section C mentions state benchmarks for cohort graduation rate, but does not provide specific targets for JPS and does not provide this by sub-group.
    - o For (c) graduation rate - the application does not provide this, noting that goals for this will be established in 2012-13.

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	0

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS does not meet this sub-criterion. It provides no evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching:
  - The text under (B)(1) provides the statement “we have the vision and we have the ability.”
  - Otherwise there is no information on a track record of success – or indeed, any information (text, charts or graphs, raw student data or other evidence) regarding the performance of the district over the past four years. (There is only text, and that provides a philosophical argument for why, “in an era marked by rapid and global change” we need to ensure that students pursue academic excellence).
  - This information does not appear elsewhere in the application.
2. With regard to the sub selection criteria, JPS does not meet (a), (b), or (c).

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

1. Section (2): JPS asserts a commitment to increasing the transparency and flow of information to stakeholders inside and outside of the school system, however they provide minimal evidence of how they do this. Much of what they do include centers around compliance (“The superintendent, school board members, and authorized representatives of the district assure compliance with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program,” and using as their evidence for transparency on the school-level costs below, that district policy on this “was adopted to comply with the requirements of the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983.”).
2. Sections (a)-(d): Met partially (minimally). With regard to school-level cost data, JPS says that it “already makes available” the four categories of school-level expenditures required in this sub selection criterion. However, the only detail they provide on the extent to which they meet this is a statement that “All ‘public records’ maintained by the district, as defined by the Act, are made available for access and duplication, subject to the exceptions and

requirements of policies, and other state or federal laws.” The inclusion of this statement, coupled with a lack of description of how the district actually publishes the information or makes people aware of its existence, suggests that members of the public may have to request the information individually, which provides only very modest support to a commitment to transparency.

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

10

3

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS’s application dos not substantially meet this sub selection criterion.
2. The district does not provide evidence of conditions and autonomy already existing under State statutory and regulatory requirements, and therefore does not describe how such conditions and autonomy support the implementation of the personalized learning environments described in their proposal.
3. Instead, in this section, they describe four state of Mississippi “future reforms,” three of which are not substantively related to successful conditions or sufficient autonomy, but one of which, "Great Teachers and Leaders - future reform," describes the state's "plans to" address a number of legal, statutory or regulatory issues relating to conditions surrounding HR management of teachers and administrators, including: the creation of evaluation instruments for measuring teacher and leader progress in meeting standards, developing a value-added career model linking performance and incentives to student progress, and structures to ensure effective teachers and leaders are equitably distributed. These "future reforms" did not address the issue of sufficient autonomy.

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

10

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. Section 4 (a): JPS offers a detailed description of implementing an effective stakeholder engagement process involving dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals having input at multiple stages:
  - teachers, administrators, support staff, students, families, and community members were sent a comprehensive needs assessment survey and/or involved in face-to-face meetings, generating data for a draft of the initial vision and core elements of the application.
  - The draft of these early elements was shared with principal coaches, parents, and community-based organizations for further input.
  - The superintendent conducted several intensive work session to outline the full document, when appropriate including school level employees and support staff and community members.(Sign-in sheet evidence of the Grant Planning Committee sessions is included in the appendix, but there is no evidence provided of the broader stakeholder engagement activities.)
2. Section (a)(ii): Not met. The applicant qualifies as an LEA without collective bargaining representation (no signature of local teachers’ union/association), so they are required “at a minimum” to show “evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools...support the proposal.” JPS mentions including teachers in a needs assessment survey, but provides no evidence of how many teachers supported the application. Since teacher buy-in would be essential to the implementation of personalized learning environments, this is a significant omission.
3. Section (b): Met partially. JPS provided one letter of support and commitment from a key stakeholder outside the school community – the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Partnership – however this letter was signed by all eight of the community organizations within the partnership. This represents a solid showing of support from community organizations as well as a local college, and county and state mental and behavioral health, early childhood, and police services. However there were no letters of support from other types of stakeholders like parents, student groups, or the business community.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS does not meet this sub selection criteria to a significant extent. Instead of providing a plan “for an analysis of their current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal in

addressing these gaps,” the district provides other information that is not directly relevant to this requirement, e.g:

- The narrative provides a list of goals from the new Superintendent’s entry plan, which are laudable, but not relevant to this sub criterion.
- The application does say “Please see the appendices for a detailed analysis of the needs and gaps in the Jackson Public School District.” There is no analysis identified as such in the appendices.
- The note may refer to the Superintendent’s entry plan, which is included in the appendix. This is a strong document, though more limited in scope, that would largely qualify as “high quality” and that includes a reasonable plan for assessing needs and gaps, however, a) the plan for assessing needs is NOT focused on the applicant’s status in implementing personalized learning environments, but rather general school and district improvement, and b) the timeframe covered is from this past summer through to August, and in some cases to the end of 2012.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS has met only partially the requirements of this selection criterion for a high-quality plan for improving teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment:

2. In terms of the quality of the plans provided:

- It does provide, for most of these strategies, two of the elements of a “high quality” plan: a goal and a timeframe (though this is not exactly a timeline – most have a single month and year attached to them; unclear if it is a start date or a complete date).
- It does not provide, for most of these strategies, the other four elements of a “high quality” plan: actionable Activities (See discussion of JPS “activity” statements in Section (A)(3), which is also relevant to this plan -Many of the statements refer to an outcome (e.g. requiring teacher input to problem-solving on intervention) without an accompanying concrete activity to achieve the outcome (e.g. establishing teacher representation on student intervention teams), deliverables, parties responsible (typically the text says simply “we” or “Jackson Public Schools”), or overall credibility. The last stems from a) the lack of quality characteristics, b) the fact that the goals and strategies relevant to the selection criteria had to be extracted from much longer lists of more general reform goals, and c) the fact that these approaches are not reflected in an identifiable way within the applicant’s vision or proposed budget.

3. In terms of the content of the plan/coverage of the features listed in the selection criteria:

- It does include a number of the practices and strategies listed in the sub-attributes of this criterion (see below\* comment 4).
- Most critically, however, it lacks sufficient demonstration of the types of features that are most central to meeting the Selection Criteria’s emphasis on “personalizing the learning environment,” and “empower[ing] all learners.” Key features missing from the plan (sub-criteria not met) include: (b)(i) a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development,(a)(ii – second part) student understanding how to structure their learning to achieve their goals; (b) (iii) high quality content, including digital learning content; (b)(iv)(A) ongoing and regular/frequently updated data (there is an item for “reducing the number of current assessments” (presumably talking about summative or time-consuming but infrequent benchmark assessments) but personalized learning prioritizes formative assessments and realtime (task, daily or weekly) assessments built into the learning), (b)(iv)(B) personalized learning recommendations, and (c) mechanisms to provide training to students to ensure they understand how to use tools for tracking and managing their learning.

These features together provide the framework of student-centered and student-owned learning on which some of the other features (like deep learning experiences or the exposure to diverse cultures) hang. The applicant’s vision and its budget also lack these central features. Without these, there is insufficient evidence of planning for systems change, platforms or the re-design of instructional and schools environments to an extent that would increase the chance of the district succeeding in a change as dramatic as “personalizing the learning environment.”

4. \* Features that are included in the plan (met or met partially in terms of content; but generally with only a goal statement and a date) are: (a)(i) student understanding relationship between their learning and goals – mentions college planning and career exploration initiatives; (a)(ii – first part) learning goals linked to college and career standards – common core; (a)(iii) deep learning – e.g. inquiry-based learning in science, Health Academy; (a)(iv) access to diverse cultures – culturally rich learning resources and classrooms infused with experiences affirming backgrounds; (a)(v) academic content and “21st C skills – e.g. use of “power objectives; (b)(ii) variety of instructional approaches/environments – e.g. health academy, early college, middle academy, internship academy; (b)(v) accommodations for high need students – only partly met. Resources for support services are mentioned,. however, they do not explain how these would operate within a new personalized learning environment, or be obviated, or be replaced by different supports.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	6
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS has met only partially the requirements of this selection criterion for a “high-quality” plan for improving teaching and leading by personalizing the learning environment. Almost all of the general comments provided in section (C)(1) are relevant to (C)(2) (a)-(c) as well with some variation.
2. In terms of the quality, the plan does not meet most of the requirements for "high quality":
  - It provides, for most of these strategies, just one of the elements of a “high quality” plan: a goal. Some of the relevant statements are even more ambiguous: “The district recognized the value of,” or “we must,” or “there is a need to.”
  - It does not provide, for most of these strategies, the other five elements of a “high quality” plan: actionable Activities (See discussion of JPS “Activities” in Section (A)(3), which is also relevant here -Many of the statements refer to an outcome (e.g. requiring teacher input to problem-solving on intervention) without an accompanying concrete activity to achieve the outcome (e.g. establishing teacher representation on student intervention teams), timeliness, deliverables, parties responsible (typically the text says simply “we” or “Jackson Public Schools”), or overall credibility. The last stems from a) the lack of quality characteristics, b) the fact that the goals and strategies relevant to the selection criteria had to be extracted from text which includes other topics, and c) the fact that these approaches are not reflected in an identifiable way within the vision or the proposal budget.
3. In terms of the content of the plan/coverage of the features listed in the selection criteria, the application provides sparse evidence on many aspects of plans for increasing educator capacity to implement personalized learning and teaching through training, and tools, with some more detailed evidence relating to evaluation systems that generate feedback.
  - For subsections (a) (i)-(ii) on training and teams to support educator capacity to support the effective implementation of PLE and adapt content for student-focused and optimal learning – not met. JPS provides no evidence on these critical sub criteria (text in these sections relate instead to the use of common core and state assessments to assess student learning).
  - For sub-section (a) (iii) on frequently measure student progress and use data to inform both student progress and improvement of practice of educators – met partially through plans to use Child Progress Academic Assessment, a computer-adaptive PreK-2 assessment which adjusts to individual student learning ability, provides individual recommendations for academic activities and provides clear reporting for educators. However, the application does not address the purpose of this sub criterion, which is how educators will be engaged in training or teams to support their capacity to use tools like this.
  - For sub-section (a) (iv) on improving practice through feedback from evaluation systems – met partially through use of MSTAR state teaching appraisal rubric (including multiple measures), which includes formative assessment information and guides for self-reflection for individual teachers, and tools for principals to use in instructional leadership. Again, however, this description, and that of the MS Principal’s evaluation system, does not address how feedback from the evaluations would be used to provide supports or otherwise improve teachers’ and principals’ practice to enable the full implementation of personalized learning.
  - For subsections (b) (i)-(iii) on providing educators with tools and training to identify optimal learning approaches, provide high-quality content and assessment resources (including digital) and tools to match one with the other – not met. JPS does not address these issues.

- For subsection (c) (i)-(ii) on school leaders having training, tools, etc to enable them to structure effective personalized learning environments – met only partially. There are broad statements on intentions to track and measure leader effectiveness and introduce a field-based residency, but insufficient concrete plans provided.

3. Sub section (d), requiring the applicant’s high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers – met only partially. JPS’s plans do not fulfill most requirements of a “high quality” plan, including only goals or aspirational statements, without actionable activities, timeline, deliverables, parties responsible or context/budget follow through to establish credibility.

The plans do include goal or aspiration statements on some useful steps toward increasing the effectiveness of teachers, including: a goals of “increasing retention rate of high performing teachers and principals in hard to staff schools by 30% each year of the grant period, “revisiting” a recent salary compensation study to look at differentiated compensation, introducing performance assessment on a typical task to teacher hiring, etc. There is no evidence of any type of strategy relating to increasing the reach of existing high-quality teachers through teacher role/instructional re-design, (e.g. master teachers co-teaching or directly managing small groups of classrooms).

### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS has met only partially the requirement for a “high quality plan” to “support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure.
2. In terms of the quality of the plan provided:
  - It does provide, for some proposed strategies, one of the elements of a “high quality” plan: goals.
  - It does not, in virtually all cases, provide the other five elements of a “high quality” plan: actionable Activities (See discussion of JPS “activity” statements in Section (A)(3), which is also relevant to this plan -Many of the statements refer to an outcome (e.g. requiring teacher input to problem-solving on intervention) without an accompanying concrete activity to achieve the outcome (e.g. establishing teacher representation on student intervention teams), timelines, deliverables, parties responsible (typically the text says simply “we” or “Jackson Public Schools” – in a few cases the Holistic Accountability Team is mentioned), or overall credibility. The last stems from a) the lack of quality characteristics, b) the fact that the goals and strategies relevant to the selection criteria had to be extracted from more general discussions of reform goals, and c) the fact that these approaches are not reflected either in the applicant’s vision or in an identifiable way within the proposal budget.
3. In terms of content coverage, JPS provides convincing evidence of only a few of the practices, policies, and procedures required. The extent to which sub-criteria have been met is noted below:
  - (1)(a) Met - A new Holistic Accountability Team is being set up to facilitate and coordinate reform efforts. The team will have expert advisors and include community stakeholders, and will work with individual schools on implementation. (The narrative referred to an appendix with details of team structure and members, but it is not there.)
  - (1)(b) Met – While the Holistic Accountability Team will work with school-level staff to help them select a model that best fits their needs, school leadership teams will be provided with “sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions, and staffing models, roles and responsibilities... and school-level budgets. In addition, JPS will provide to the Wingfield Feeder Pattern (their most needy set of schools) a team leader who will have the authority, in collaboration with the superintendent, “to make non-traditional decisions based on the particular needs of the communities and schools served in this feeder pattern.”
  - (1)(c)-(e) (grouped by the applicant) Met partially– JPS usefully mentions using the lessons learned from SWD to apply to all. They assert that they will “revamp practices” to give students the opportunity to progress based on demonstrated mastery, to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways and to provide equitable learning resources. There are a few actionable activity statements on Holistic Accountability Team processes to assist schools to

choose the best “routes” to these ends, but the specific actions noted relating to these areas are confined to mastery progression outside the mainstream classroom: credit recovery, early college, etc. There do not appear to be specific plans for steps to move toward progression-based on mastery rather than seat time for all.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS has met partially the requirement for a “high quality plan” for LEA and school infrastructure to support personalizes learning.
2. In terms of the quality of the plan provided:
  - It does provide, for some proposed strategies, two or three of the elements of a “high quality” plan: goals, and (for a separate technology integration plan) actionable activities and timelines.
  - It does not, provide the other three to five elements of a “high quality” plan: For non tech integration - actionable Activities (See discussion of JPS “activity” statements in Section (A)(3), which is also relevant to this plan -Many of the statements refer to an outcome (e.g. requiring teacher input to problem-solving on intervention) without an accompanying concrete activity to achieve the outcome (e.g. establishing teacher representation on student intervention teams), and timelines. For all strategies - deliverables, parties responsible (typically the text says simply “we” or “Jackson Public Schools”), or overall credibility. The last stems from a) the lack of quality characteristics, b) the fact that these approaches are not reflected either in the applicant’s vision or in an identifiable way within the proposal budget.
3. In terms of content coverage, JPS provides convincing evidence of only a few of the practices, policies, and procedures required. The extent to which sub-criteria have been met is noted below:
  - (2)(a-b) (access and technical support, grouped by applicant) Met partially – JPS provides seven useful recommendations the district will implement to address equitable access by families and schools, however many of these are at a very high level, e.g. “ensure a basic level of access and capacity for all schools.”
  - (2)(c-d) (open data format and inter-operable systems, grouped by applicant) Met partially – the applicant mentions seeking communication solutions that meet interoperability standards. There is no specific reference to specifying that systems will allow students and parents to export info in open data format.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS meets this sub-criterion partially.
2. The district provides adequate demonstration of using a suitable continuous improvement concept, which they will apply to continuously improving its PLE plan. Their approach includes goal statements (but not specific activities, timelines, etc, at least some of which should be provided, given that the criterion asks for a “high quality approach”/“rigorous improvement process.”
3. Their CI model (a Plan-Do-Check-ACT iterative process is sound as far as it goes:
  - Facilitation by the Holistic Accountability Team (HAT), which will be responsible for setting baseline standards, monitoring the successful attainment of goals, providing resources and direction to those implementing plans, clarify organizational priorities, etc.
  - The HAT will review and approve road maps and proposals, review and approve budgets, review and report updates publicly, and adjust and revise implementation processes.
4. However, no evidence is provided for how the process will provide timely and regular feedback (no cycle length, quarterly feedback, etc, specified), and no detail on how ongoing corrections and improvements will be made beyond HAT oversight.

5. JPS has not provided insufficient information on how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff;
6. A set of six Goals for Continuous Improvement provided are not related to continuous improvement processes.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS provides an actionable and thoughtful plan for communication activities with a range of internal and external stakeholders that includes eight established goals and eleven additional components, addressing the usual awareness, perception and communication issues. Strong additional points include:
  - Some concrete actions relating to increasing volunteerism in schools by community members as a way to increase engagement.
  - The development of superintendent advisory councils to engage community members in district decision-making,
  - Conducting a communications audit to provide a status baseline for developing and evaluating the effect of their efforts.
2. Their approach includes goal statements (but not specific activities, timelines, etc, at least some of which should be provided, given that the criterion asks for a “high quality approach”/”rigorous” improvement process).

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS does not meet this sub-criterion in a substantial way.
2. The district has not provided performance measures. The application states: “While the following information is required of all RTT – D applicants, due to the needs and gaps of the Jackson Public School District, the information requested by the United States Department of Education is not collected for specific sections requested in this part.”
3. JPS explains that their new superintendent (as of summer 2012) has already started working toward collecting and monitoring data and adds that “The Jackson Public School District assures the United States Department of Education that it will work diligently and accomplish the task to complete these sections within the first four (4) months, if awarded. All students, specific subgroups, and students of specific grade bands will be determined and baselines and targets will be set during Term 3 of SY 2012-2013. The district has included, in the appendices, copies of each school’s achievement and growth data.”
4. While an applicant can chose to convey “to be determined” for future targets, this reply is considered to be “not fully responsive” to the application’s request for “ambitious yet achievable” targets. However, JPS did not even select the appropriate applicant-proposed measures for its proposal, or provide baseline information for any of the required or applicant-proposed measures within the table supplied (thought it did include in its appendices printouts of their 51 individual schools’ AMOS baseline and growth projections from the statewide accountability system).
5. The district therefore also provides no evidence on the sub- criteria (a), (b), and (c), and fails to meet the total of 12 to 14 measure.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS’s application has not substantially met this sub criterion.
2. The narrative for this section in the application provides further discussion of continuous improvement processes, but neither this section nor the rest of the application provides explicit plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities, and to more productively use time or other resources in order to improve results.
2. However, the Holistic Accountability Team’s work in monitoring successful attainment of goals may include some analysis that would contribute to evaluation of investment.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JPS's application does not meet the requirements of this selection criterion in a significant way, for either coverage or fulfillment of the sub-criteria.</li> <li>Only part of the budget sections are included:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The overall Budget Summary, including Tables and Narratives, are included.</li> <li>The Project-level Detail, including Tables and Narratives, are omitted.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Only some of the sub-criteria are met:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) identifying funding sources - Not met. The application notes on the summary table RTT-D funds versus funds from other sources, but they do not identify the "other sources"</li> <li>(b) reasonableness and sufficiency – Insufficient information to determine. Because the application does not provide the project-level budgets and narratives, there is insufficient scope and detail to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable.</li> <li>(c) rationale – meets criterion in terms of a broad description of standard school reform goals, does not provide a thoughtful, coherent rationale for investments and priorities relating to an innovative proposal for a personalized learning environment. (note that the "Project Names" on the summary project table relate to the broad reform goals listed in the Vision section, rather than the plans at least partially addressing a personalized learning environment in Selection Criterion C.</li> <li>(c)(I) identification of funds -as per (a), not met.</li> <li>(c) (ii) identification of one-time versus ongoing operational costs – not met, focus on strategies for sustainability within the budget – not evident.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JPS does not meet this selection criterion, which includes the requirement for a high quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant, in any substantial way.</li> <li>There is no Section (F)(2) in the main narrative proposal (as specified in the application packet), but it is provided in the Budget appendix.</li> <li>The district's section (F)(2) lists a set of five goals "to govern our sustainability efforts," each with associated indicators. However, the goals – Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement - do not relate specifically to sustainability, and neither do their indicators. Substantive plans for sustainability are not provided elsewhere in the application either.</li> </ol>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) JPS provides a solid proposal for the Competitive Preference Priority, based largely on their existing and expanding partnership with a Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Partnership that includes JPS, and a good selection agencies and organizations, including the State Department of Mental Health, the local mental health authority, the Henley Young</li> </ol>		

Juvenile Justice Center, the Jackson Police Department, Tougaloo College (afterschool and summer programming), Marion Counseling Services, and the MS Department of Human Services Early Childhood Division.

- The application provides evidence of the Partnership’s coherence and sustainability, noting that the first five of the partners have worked together for 15 years, and the other joined for a Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant in 2008.
  - The only concern on this front is the continued stability of the lead partner (an extremely important element, as revealed in Promise Neighborhood work), as the Partnership Director is the Executive Director of SS/HS, and the current funding is now in its final year of implementation (though it is possible she is staff in one of the partnership organizations).
2. (2) The Partnership has identified a good set of seven population-level desired results for students in the LEA, and seven related indicators that align with and support the applicant’s proposal. They include both academic (results a-d on their list), and family and community support (results e-g on their list).
  3. (3) JPS provides a suitable description of how:
    - (a) the partners will track the selected indicators – this part of the proposal has particular strength, with an MOU that allows data sharing among partners (this is not easy to create!) who have been working across agency boundaries for 15 years, and with their evidence of a local external evaluation firm that has four years of experience working with them to increase capacity in data gathering and analysis.
    - (b) use data to target its resources, with special emphasis on students with significant challenges - The partnership will draw on its working experience and continued help from the evaluation firm to turn the data into action, noting that students with significant challenges have always been their primary service population.
    - (c) Their strategy to scale the model - JPS and the Partnership propose a suitable plan to start in Y1 with the middle school population (because the partnership has worked heavily with them in the past four years, and because it still presents with the highest risk), and expand to HS students in Y2 and elementary in Y3.
    - (d) to improve results over time – JPS proposes to continue to monitor performance measures established in 2009, however it does not give details of how it would do this, or when new measures might be considered.
  4. (4) The Partnership provides a credible response to this sub-criterion, clearly based on past experience of the group already working together for children in the city schools. They note that “all services will be MOU-driven and evaluated by the partnership,” both of which add to the credibility of the plan. The integration plan includes positive aspects such as that school-based health and mental health provider will have offices at designated schools, that school-based providers will agree to maximize the existing resource of third party payments when possible, the Police will share the cost of maintaining a cadre of 6 School resource officers, etc.
  5. Section (5) of this Competitive Preference Priority asks applicants to describe how the partnership and LEA would “build the capacity of staff in participating schools... by providing them with tools and supports to perform a number of tasks. JPS’s Partnership meets this sub-criterion with suitable descriptions of both training and tools for each task:
    - (a) assessing needs – a three-gated process with a Behavior screening tool, RTI process and Partnership referrals, and related training
    - (b) inventory of needs and assets – training in resource-mapping, mentoring in developing site-specific resource guide
    - (d) engagement of parents and families – input from family satisfaction surveys and participation in site councils will be used
    - (e) Assessment of progress – Providers will be required to include evaluation components pertinent to their service and share results as part of the MOU, and the Partnership meets regularly to assess overall partnership outcomes.
  6. The Competitive Preference application includes six metrics to be used as performance measures for this Competitive Priority, and proposes suitable annual goals for four of the six measures. Percentages for HS dropout rate, and secondary crime rate are missing.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not	Not Met

	Met	
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has not met the Absolute Priority on personalized learning environments because it did not coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create a personalized learning environment (as described in this priority, with all of its various elements) designed to improve teaching and learning (in the ways described) and improve student achievement, decrease achievement gaps (and attain the other goals described).</p> <p>The first critical issue relates to the criterion to “build on the four core educational assurance areas.” Jackson Public Schools provides extremely limited evidence on its status or record of success in any of the four assurances – progress based on adopting college-ready standards and assessments, building and use of data systems that measure student growth and success and inform instruction, recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, and turning round lowest-achieving schools. This is reflected in the comments and scores for Section B.</p> <p>Given the lack of evidence on the assurances, the applicant is also unable to provide a convincing case that plans to create a personalized learning environment build on these core education areas.</p> <p>Aside from this starting point, the district also provides insufficient evidence in this application of a coherent vision, strategy and high quality plans to create a learning environment that is sufficiently re-designed to successfully implement personalized learning (as described in this priority) and to achieve the next level of performance goals.</p> <p>The applicant's proposed vision, most of its strategies and plans, as described in the application, address general improvement of teaching and learning practices, differentiation within the traditional classroom paradigm, and personalized supports for high need students. While the application includes some components that could contribute to a personalized learning environment, it includes insufficient evidence of credible plans to redesign learning to situate it within a personalized environment (for example: the establishment of learning management systems; progression for all students based on mastery rather than time on topic; learning and curriculum choices driven by student interest as well as skill level and learning style; expansion of student access to the most effective teachers (as opposed to increasing the numbers of effective teachers over time); integration into core courses of blended learning and other strategies to address the adaptability and cost implications of personalize learning, or other core features that would be likely to “dramatically transform the learning environment” in the ways targeted in this application.</p>		

Total	210	67
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

1. JPS's Optional Budget Supplement is for a project to develop, in conjunction with Henley Young Juvenile Justice Center (HYJJC), transition services to youth who are enrolled in JPS, are under the jurisdiction of youth court, and are transferred to the program by the judge.
2. The proposal fits foundational requirements of the selection criteria in two fundamental ways:
  - The department says that “applications for this funding will be judged on the extent to which the applicant has a clear, discrete, and innovative solution.” The issue of transition services to youth in the juvenile justice system is a thorny issue that school districts have long needed a better answer to, and a partnership with the experience of this one seems well placed to suggest a solution that can be replicated.
  - The application also calls for the plan to be developed and carried out across “two or more LEAs.” JPS fulfills this requirement by involving two other LEAs: Hinds County Schools, and Clinton Public Schools, though we are provided no information on how they would be involved.
3. (1) JPS presents a clear rational for the need and the special population to be addressed: Students who enter HYJJC are often 2-5 grade levels behind and have a history of social/behavioral challenges. The existing mental health, counseling and educational services do not share information, plan together, or follow students from one location to another.

4. (2) JPS presents a brief plan for how it would carry out the activities: develop a Transition Unit attached to HYJJC, using existing staff person, add four full time case managers through this supplement and train them in a wraparound approach, create a cross-disciplinary service team to evaluate referrals, support transition through Case manager, etc.
  - There is some credibility to the plan as it has been created by organizations working effectively together for many years in this field, and the project-level budget seems thorough, reasonable and convincing.
  - This plan does not fully meet the criteria for a “high quality” plan, however, as it provides more of a description of the finished program than a plan to set it up – no specific set up activities, timelines, deliverables, or parties responsible.
5. (3) The proposed budget appears to be adequate to support the development and implementation of the activities, and seems reasonable in relation to the objectives and significance of the proposed activities. Number of students served could not be found. It is fair to expect that the number served will always be lower for this kind of very high-need population than for other types of services, but given the money spent and wasted due to the lack of good transitional services, it can still provide a very good return on investment, in addition to the impact on the students involved



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1095MS-2 for Jackson Public School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has addressed college and career readiness multiple times. The goal of working with colleges to ensure that coursework is aligned with those institutions is an excellent goal for demonstrating how the district will ensure their students are prepared.  The applicant has demonstrated that they will use data systems to improve instruction by conducting a needs assessment and establishing baseline data and by using data-based inquiry. The use of data is threaded throughout this section and is commendable.  The applicant has outlined how they will address the element of great teachers and great leaders by strengthening the recruitment and preparation of teachers. How they will improve teacher and leader effectiveness has not been addressed.  By creating high-performance cultures, the applicant has delineated in specific ways in which they intend to turn around the lowest-performing schools.  The applicant has addressed accelerating student achievement, but has not articulated the interventions that they intend to use.  The applicant has not thoroughly addressed how they intend to deepen student learning.  The applicant addresses equity by moving toward comparability in resources between high and low poverty schools.  This section thoroughly outlines the goals but is not as specific as needed with reference to articulating a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

- (a) The applicant did not provide a description of the process that is used to select the schools to participate.
- (b) The list of schools was provided.
- (c) The applicant provided a comprehensive view of the number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need, and participating educators.

It appears that the majority, if not all of the the district's schools are participating in this reform; however, the applicant did not provide a description of the process or provide any descriptive rationale.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district's goal is to increase the number of students on track to graduate from college or earn a career credential by 2018.

This specific section is inadequate. It does not address the reform in a meaningful way, nor does it specify exactly what the reform measure is beyond increasing career and college success for its students. What is written in this section are mostly generalizations and allusions to success; however, the applicant does not explicitly define what that success looks like from the standpoint of a reform proposal. The outcome goals are not specifically addressed and neither are theories or change, change itself, or how they plan will improve student learning outcomes.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	0
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section is not addressed 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	0

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not provided any evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years. No data is provided and sub-sections a, b, and c are not addressed.

This section was not completed.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not demonstrated that a high level of transparency exists. The applicant addresses sub-sections a-d, but does not provide compelling evidence that the information is easily accessible. In fact, the applicant does not describe how the information is available, only that it is provided. The applicant notes that additional information is available in the appendices; however, it is not clear what the additional evidence is, nor is it noted where with the appendix that this information is located. Even looking at the table of contents for the appendix does not provide a clear explanation of what information relates to this section of the proposal. While the applicant does state that the transparency exists, evidence has not been provided that demonstrates this.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not specifically addressed any of the legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements of the state of Mississippi. One reference is made to "Children First Act and New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Legislation." Unfortunately, the applicant does not identify if this is one grand reform or 2 to 3 specific reforms. Also, these reforms and legislation are not explained or addressed further. The applicant only discusses the educational landscape in the state without noting how the applicant's proposal will be accomplished within the framework of the legal, statutory, and regulatory

requirements within the state.

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

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The "feedback loop" and the "invested groups" should be more thoroughly described.

The "needs assessment survey" should be explained.

The applicant cites examples of various meetings and open house events as evidence of stakeholder development of the proposal.

The applicant has not demonstrated clear engagement of students. The applicant has not demonstrated teacher involvement, especially in relation to sub-sections (a)(i) or (a)(ii). The applicant has not provided specific evidence concerning principals in participating schools or to what extent families were involved outside of participating in the meetings and open houses.

The applicant only provides two letters of support (which are not noted within this section, but are found in the appendix). One of these letters is from the superintendent of the district. There are no letters of support from many of the other examples mentioned in the criteria for this section.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

It would be helpful if the applicant would refer to specific page numbers within the appendix when referring to proposal elements that are within that section.

The applicant discusses college awareness programs but does not give any detail concerning those programs.

In regards to expanding professional development for teachers and increasing partnerships with institutes of higher learning, the applicant does not specify how these two initiatives will any needs and gaps in the district.

There are some concrete examples of plan initiatives that have promise; however, the explanation in this section relating to implementing personalized learning environments and identifying needs and gaps is not included.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
It is unclear why this section is labeled with an (E).		
The applicant should explain how reorganizing the district into more effective, geographic feeder patterns will support the goals of this proposal.		
The applicant only mentions the state of Mississippi's role in dropout prevention and does not explain how the district will incorporate those goals. The goal of reducing dropout prevention is addressed in GL2; however, rationale and process are not addressed.		
The goals have been clearly outlined in this section. There is rationale and explanation for many of them. Sub-section (A)(i-iii) has been thoroughly addressed. (A)(iii) is also specifically addressed in a thorough manner in GL.21.		
(A)(iv) is addressed properly in GL.29 and GL.30.		
In regards to section B, the personalized sequence of instructional content is adequately addressed as well as the variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments that are outlined in the list of goals. High quality content, especially digital learning, is not adequately addressed. There are sparse examples of technology-related goals within this sub-section. For (B)(iv) the discussion of feedback is not addressed adequately. For (B)(v) accommodations is not addressed adequately.		
Training is adequately addressed in GL.18, GL,19, and GCC.6		
The goals in this section are ambitious and admirable. The district has excellent ideas for how to address college-readiness		

for their students. A majority of the elements of this section were addressed; however, some areas were not adequately addressed.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The majority of the applicant's goals in this section are related to teacher recruitment and retention. While this is admirable, it does not necessarily address the explicit goals for this section. The applicant addresses teacher shortages, increasing employee diversity, reducing teacher resignations, and retaining high quality teachers; yet, the applicant does not relate any of these goals to the sub-sections explicitly detailed in sections A-C. A case could be made that all of these goals relate to sub-section D in regards to increasing the amount of highly effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools; however, the applicant does not make that case.

The applicant does address element (i) of sub-section C with regard to the teacher evaluation system and collective educator effectiveness; however, (ii) is not adequately addressed.

In summary, the applicant addresses minimal elements of A-D and spends a great deal of time on a topic that is unrelated to the elements outlined within this section.

#### 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>(a) The applicant has successfully demonstrated the ability to meet this criteria through the organization of the central office and the creation of the Holistic Accountability Team.</p> <p>(b) The applicant has adequately addressed this criteria; however, more specific description would have been helpful. The applicant was very general in the description of the actions.</p> <p>(c-d) The applicant demonstrated the fulfillment of this criteria through an exemplary understanding of the process of incorporating mastery learning into the curriculum.</p> <p>(e) The applicant addressed English learners and students with disabilities but did not specify the practices that would be used to accomplish the goal of this section.</p> <p>The applicant addressed every criteria within this section; however, some areas were slightly lacking and only generally discussed.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant has demonstrated a commitment to this criteria by creating parent focus groups and performing an initial needs assessment.</p> <p>The applicant has successfully demonstrated a commitment to personalized learning and infrastructure in criteria (b-d) through the Goals for Technology Intergration (GTI). By developing an online parent-student resource toolkit, the applicant has demonstrated the ability to ensure that all stakeholders have an appropriate level of technological support (b). Criteria (d) is threaded throughout the GTI statement.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated an ability to support personalized learning through infrastructure improvements and has outlined explicit policy goals for increasing the participation of all stakeholders through numerous levels of technical support.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated the ability to adequately monitor the proposal through the Holistic Accountability Team (HAT). HAT will be responsible for insuring that the elements of the proposal are completed in a timely manner and that all resources are used appropriately. The HAT has an outline for the process of the proposal and the applicant has thoroughly defined the responsibilities of the HAT.</p> <p>The applicant has made allusions to measuring and assessing progress through the Goals for Continuous Improvement; however, specific outlines of measurements are needed.</p> <p>The applicant has not addressed how information will be publicly shared.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is of superior quality. The applicant has thoroughly demonstrated how they intend to have ongoing communication and engagement. The applicant recognizes the importance of communication and has identified the numerous stakeholders that are involved in this line of communication between the district and the community. The "Goals for Communication and Engagement" are ambitious and achievable. The district seeks to increase the number of business and community partnerships and to increase the number of volunteer hours. These are both admirable goals. The "State of Our Schools" event is also a great idea.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not have the data to complete this requirement. The applicant has provided a rationale for not addressing this topic and has provided an assurance to the department of education that this aspect will be addressed within the first four months if the grant is awarded.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant makes references to AdvancED and The Improvement Life Cycle as evidence of a commitment to continuous improvement. The Improvement Life Cycle is adequately explained but the guiding principles of AdvancED is not. The connection is made to building a stronger school; however, more specifics are needed in regard to all of the elements that the district intends to evaluate during this process. The applicant only re-addresses the mentioned criteria without giving specifics as to how continuous improvement will occur in each area.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The overall budget summary narrative is concise and addresses all of the goals outlined in the proposal.</p> <p>The budget itself is not specific enough and does not thoroughly identify all of the expenditures. There are numerous categories such as personnel, fringe benefits, travel, etc; however, none of these categories are explained in depth. For example, over \$2.5 million is requested for "fringe benefits." An amount such as this should be explained in detail. So while the narrative and rationale for each area is strong, the overall detail with regards to expenditures is lacking. Budget Table 2.1</p>		

does provide more detail with reference to the specific projects that will be established; however, the details in regards to the training, personnel, and materials expenditures for these projects has not been addressed. Sub-section (C)(ii) is not addressed adequately.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses this section with goals and indicators for each area of the project. The applicant only addresses the sustainability of the project during the grant and does not address the sustainability of the goals after the grant--which is the important aspect of this section.

Support from state and local government leaders and financial support is not addressed.

The applicant did not adequately address the criteria of this section.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has outlined partnerships with local mental health agencies and the local law enforcement agencies. These partnerships have provided school resource officers and mental health providers to the district.

The applicant has identified 7 population-level results that align with the proposal in the area of college readiness and turning around low performing schools.

The applicant has adequately addressed all of the criteria in sub-section 3.

The applicant has provided excellent examples of education and other services will be integrated such as the early childhood project and the addition of school resource officers.

The applicant has clearly addressed all of the criteria in sub-sections 5 and 6.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has stated many ways in which the district intends to improve college-readiness. Data systems to improve instruction are properly addressed in various sections that detail technology improvements and how technology can improve communication and assessment. Turning around low performing schools is addressed from the standpoint of identifying the high-needs students and giving them the resources they need to be successful. The district intends to recruit and retain better teachers and leaders, but it should be noted that the training of these teachers and lack of detail is a weak element of this proposal.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>93</b>
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### 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 district has requested an optional budget to fund transition services. This is an excellent proposal that focuses on high needs students and forms a partnership with the local juvenile justice center. A strong rationale is provided and the budget is extremely detailed--unlike the regular budget in the formal proposal. This type of budgetary detail should have been included in the main budget.



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1095MS-3 for Jackson Public School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant successfully sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision for whole-child reform that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas.

Core Assurance Area 1 - Adopting Standards and Assessments

- The applicant plans to:
  - Adopt rigorous standards including the CCSS
  - Implement a high-quality assessment system designed to support teachers in helping student achieve the standards

Core Assurance Area 2 - Building data systems

- The applicant plans to:
  - Support a more effective use of data to identify school-level needs and improve student outcomes
  - Improve capacity and infrastructure at the district-level to support the effective use of technology to improve and inform instruction

Core Assurance Area 3 - Recruiting, Developing, Rewarding, and Retaining effective teachers and principals

- The applicant plans to Adopt policies:
  - That will meaningfully differentiate teachers and principals by effectiveness across performance levels
  - That are consistent with the state's evaluation systems for teachers and principals
  - That will provide meaningful feedback to teachers and principals to improve their practices and inform professional development
  - That are developed in collaboration with teachers, principals and others

Core Assurance Area 4 - Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools

- The applicant plans to:
  - Provide Whole-child Student Supports to ensure a well-rounded education
  - Strengthen the teaching and learning of arts, foreign languages, history and civics, financial literacy, environmental education and other subjects
  - Expand instructional practices for which there is demonstrated evidence improving student performance
  - Provide high-quality professional development
  - Provide better assessments
  - Provide high-quality curricular

- o Provide appropriate resources

The applicant scores medium. The applicant has a coherent and comprehensive vision of reform, and the applicant articulates a clear and credible approach as supported by the bulleted list above; however the applicant fails to demonstrate evidence of building on existing work.

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

(a) The applicant selected all schools within the district. The participating schools meet eligibility requirements with 88% of the students identified as low-income.

(b) The applicant includes a list of all schools that will participate detailing: the school, the number of educators, the number of students, the number of student identified as high-need, the number of students identified as low-income, and the number of students who will participate. All schools are participating:

(c)

Total Number of Participating Educators: 2044

Total Number of Participating Students: 29,745

Total Number of Participating High-need students: 9369

Total Number of Participating Low-Income Students: 26,319

The applicant scores high. The percentage of low-income students is 88% - well above the grant criteria of 40%.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Plan goals:

- To increase the number of students who graduate college or career ready
- To close unacceptable achievement gaps
- To create district wide reform for students from birth to college and career ready
- To pursue together a common road map - parents, schools and community
- Creating Challenging, Caring and Equitable Learning Communities that will meet the needs of all students

The applicant scores low. The applicant clearly lists the goals of the plan - it is not clear how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Performance on summative assessments

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps

(c) Graduation rates

(d) College enrollment

(e) Postsecondary degree attainment

The applicant scores low. No narrative or description is listed for this section although goals for performance on summative assessments are included in the appendix.

**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	0

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The applicant does not demonstrate a clear record of success in improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps.
  - (b) The applicant does not demonstrate ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools
  - (c) The applicant does not demonstrate making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services.
- The applicant scores low. The document does not provide a clear record of success.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Jackson Public School District already makes available the following four categories of school-level expenditures from federal, state and local funding:

- actual personnel salaries at the school and district levels for all instructional and support staff based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances
- actual personnel salaries at the school and district levels for instructional staff only
- actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only
- actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level

The applicant scores high making all required information public.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that conditions within the state are favorable to further statewide educational reform.

- Mississippi is committed
  - To providing a world-class educational system
  - To increasing the number of students graduating college and career ready
  - To use grant sources connecting pk - 12 to post-secondary
  - To building great teachers and leaders
  - To support low achieving schools
- With state support the applicant will:
  - Adopt internationally benchmarked and intellectually rigorous standards
  - Align assessments to ensure that all student meet those rigorous standards
  - Expand and sustain a district-wide longitudinal data system to assist making data informed decisions
  - Create multiple pathways to teaching and leading professions where all entities are held accountable
  - Intervene in low-performing schools to ensure that all MS students are ready for the 21st Century

The applicant scores medium. The applicant has demonstrated successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements however has not adequately described personalized learning environments making it difficult to determine the applicant's ability to implement.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed description of how students, families, teachers, and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

This process included:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Committees
- A Parent wide district conference call

It is not clear whether there is support from the teacher's union. The union president signed the grant - but in this section there is no specific mention of union support and there is no letter of support from the union president. The applicant scores medium.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an analysis of needs and gaps and evidence of a high-quality plan to implement personalized learning environments:

- Students will be required to opt-out rather than opt-in to a college preparatory curriculum
- Middle and High Schools will be required to present college awareness programs
- Provide Professional Development for teachers and administrators
- Middle and Secondary Leaders will be required to seek out and build relationships with college and university partners

The applicant scores medium for providing analysis and evidence of current status; however personalized learning environments have not been adequately described or explained.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan provides evidence of high-quality goals for learning:

- The applicant has provided 40 Goals for Learning
- The applicant has provided 9 Goals for College and Career readiness

(a) Engages and empowers learners -

(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals

- Goal 21

(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career readiness

- College and Career ready goals 1 - 9

(iii) Involved in deep learning experiences

- Goals 18 and 19

(iv) Access and exposure to diverse cultures

- Goal 30

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, etc.

- Goals 4 - 11, 21, 25, 26

(b) Ensure that each student has access to

(i) Personalized sequence of instruction

- Goal 35

(ii) Instructional approaches and environment

- Goals 39 and 40

(iii) High-quality content

- Goals, 18, 19 and 21

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback

- Frequently updated individual student data
- Personalized learning recommendations

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies

- Goal 23

(c) Training and support to students

- The college and career ready goals include training and support for students.

The applicant scores medium. There is not a goal that addresses regular or ongoing feedback for the students or parents, and it is not clear how the district will utilize the goals to develop a personalized learning environment for students. Goals 39 and 40 target teacher professional development but do not detail instructional strategies that will be shared or infused into the job-embedded environment. The plan as presented does not paint a clear picture of what personalized learning will look like for each student and how his/her environment will change as a result of implementation.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Engage in training and in professional teams or communities

(i) Support the implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies

- Will increase access to dual credit college level courses and accelerated courses
- Will adopt CCSS
- Will continue to utilize state standards for science and social studies

(ii) Adopt content and instruction

- Will adopt the CCSS
- Will implement a differentiated instruction classroom

(iii) Frequently measure student progress

(iv) Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback

- Will solicit feedback from students, parents and colleagues
- Measures will include formal and informal observations, pre-observation and post observation conferences, a review of artifacts, teacher self-assessment and student surveys
- Feedback will also be provided for principals across six processes

(b) Have access to and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress

(i) Actionable information

(ii) High-quality learning resources

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs

(c) Meet individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress

(i) Information

- M-STAR new teacher evaluation system
- Principal Evaluation System
- 

(ii) Training, systems, and practices increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps

- Will self assess

- Will target develop of the differentiated classroom

(d) Increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals

- Will implement M-STAR
- Will adopt a new compensation system providing differentiated compensation
- Will implement Mississippi Principal Evaluation System
- Will utilize VAL-ED and ISLLC standards
- Will evaluate superintendent
- Has generated specific goals for RttT-D
  - reducing resignations
  - increasing the retention rate of high performing teachers
  - ensuring that 100% of open positions are filled on opening day
  - increasing the diversity of the teaching experience

The applicant scores medium. The applicant provides evidence of a high-quality plan for teacher effectiveness as listed above. The applicant does not provide evidence of frequently measuring student progress. The applicant does not provide evidence for providing educators with actionable information, high-quality learning resources or processes and tools to match student needs.

#### 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) Organizing the LEA central office

- Will assemble a District Holistic Accountability Team
- Will recruit national and state experts in the four core educational assurance areas

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy

- Schools will have flexibility and autonomy in the areas of:
  - school schedules and calendars
  - school personnel and staffing
  - roles and responsibilities

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and not time

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students

- Will use individualized interest inventories
- Will use running records
- Will use attendance and discipline data
- Will use behavior logs and plans

The applicant scores medium. The applicant does not demonstrate a high-quality plan for facilitating personalized learning. Although the district recognizes the need for providing students opportunities to demonstrate mastery as stated in c and d, it is not clear how the district will proceed. It is also not clear how the information the applicant seeks to gather will be used to build personalized instruction for the students.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Regardless of income have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school -

the applicant plans to:

- Improve school-home communication to benefit students, their families and schools
- Promote cost-effective solutions that build upon the variety of existing student information systems, parent communication tools, and grade reporting systems
- Seek to provide communication solutions that meet interoperability standards and are compatible with as many current school communication systems and vendor products as is feasible
- Make use of a technology infrastructure to provide a menu of support services
- Ensure a basic level of access and capacity for all schools
- Provide services to support the activities for which technology is most useful to increase parental engagement
- Help schools share best practices related to school-home communication

(b) Appropriate levels of technical support

- Will employ two years of outside engineering

(c) Export their data in open data format - use the data in other electronic learning systems

(d) Interoperable data systems

- Will upgrade technology infrastructure
- Will create mobile labs
- Management Application Tool to measure the success of the network infrastructure upgrade

The district scores medium. The applicant has a high-quality plan for technology that will be used in the classroom by the teachers and the students. It is not clear how the district will supply appropriate levels of support. It is not clear how the district will support access to technology outside of schools. It is also not clear how parents will have access to the technology systems and support in using them properly. The applicant does not explain how the system will be interoperable and link student data with other systems in order to accelerate learning.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. The plan does not detail how it will provide timely and regular feedback. The plan explains that measures and baselines will be established - therefore there is not clear evidence of how the applicant will monitor, measure and publicly share information. The applicant scores medium.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant scores high - providing key goals, activities, deliverables and identifying responsible parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will establish a Holistic Accountability Team</li> <li>• Will reorganize and restructure key offices</li> <li>• Will not use funds for permanent positions</li> <li>• Will use funds to solve strategic short term issues</li> <li>• Will consider the reallocation of funds</li> </ul>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant is unable to provide the requested information. The information was not provided in their response.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of RttT-D funded activities based on the AdvancED model of continuous improvement. The proposal includes a diagram of this process, The Improvement Life Cycle. Steps include:

- Analyzing data
- Set Goals
- Plan
- Implement
- Evaluate

The applicant scores high.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a budget that identifies all funds that will support the project. The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the applicant's proposal and a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities as defined by the applicant.</p> <p>(i) A description of the funds that will be used to support the implementation of the proposal is included</p> <p>(ii) Identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments have not been identified.</p> <p>The applicant scores medium.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To sustain the project's goals after the grant the applicant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward schools for progress and success</li> <li>• Funds will be used to foster and provide collaboration</li> <li>• Expand instructional practices</li> <li>• Will ensure circular pathways to success</li> <li>• Place teachers and leaders where they are needed most</li> <li>• Strengthen teacher and leader preparation</li> </ul> <p>The applicant scores medium. It is not clear where the financial support will come from to sustain the grant; therefore it is difficult to determine if key goals, activities, rationale, timelines, etc. can continue to be delivered after the grant period ends.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The applicant provides a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that is has formed with several agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Department of Mental Health</li> <li>• Hinds Behavioral Health Services</li> <li>• Henley Young Juvenile Justice Center</li> <li>• Jackson Police Department</li> </ul>		

(2) The applicant identifies not more than 10 population-level desired results

- Readiness scores on K screener
- Two-year retainee rate will drop by 7%
- Graduation rate will improve
- Drop out rate will decrease
- Family satisfaction surveys will improve by 10%
- Students in afterschool programs will endorse college expectations by an increase of 20%
- Juvenile crime rate will decrease by 10%

(3) The partnership will:

(a) Track the selected indicators

- Readiness instrument will be administered and tracked
- SAM/MSIS data
- Survey
- Pre and Post tests
- Cross agency database

(b) Target its resources

- Core partners have worked together across agency boundaries for 15 years to provide services to individual students

(c) Strategy to scale

- Will be expanded to high school students and in Y3 to elementary students

(d) Improve results

- Performance measures from 2009 will be monitored over the life of the grant

(4) The listed providers will integrate education and other services

- School based health and management providers
- Police and/or Sheriffs
- The Toughaloo afterschool/summer programs

(5) Build the capacity of staff in participating schools

- The applicant will assess the needs of participating students
- The applicant will inventory the needs and assets of the community
- The applicant will build capacity in Rtl teams
- The applicant will include students/families in the decision making process
- The applicant will routinely assess student progress

(6) Ambitious yet achievable performance measures - goals listed in (2)

The applicant scores high. The district has in place existing partnership and infrastructure establishing evidence of a high-quality plan for this proposal.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are desinged to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization

strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators. It is not clear how the district will develop personalized learning environments for students. The applicant does not detail or explain a process for providing students and teachers with regular and timely feedback regarding student performance in order to plan personalized learning for each student. The applicant also does not explain how it will build an interoperable data system that will create an environment where data will be available to students, parents and teachers in real time. Frequent feedback, and the availability of current data - are critical pieces of personalized learning.

Total	210	101
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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 Optional Budget proposes to develop in conjunction with Henley Young Juvenile Justice Center to provide transition services to youth who are also enrolled in JPS. The OBS would provide for case management services, wraparound planning, school support services and a data tracking and sharing system.

(1) Rationale

Students who enter HYJJC are often 2 - 5 grade levels behind their age-peers

(2) High-quality Plan

The applicant provides a high-quality plan to develop a Transition Unit to develop a transition support plan for each participating student addressing needs in 3 domains: academic, social/behavioral and family/community. Plan requires a Case Manager to wupport the transition by facilitating wraparound services.

(3) The Proposed Budget

Is adequate to support the development and implementation of activities.

The applicant scores high for their rationale, high-quality plan and proposed budget.