



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0470TN-1 for Johnson City Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A1</p> <p>The vision described by Johnson City applicants articulates an approach that could accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity through a personalized learning approach in some respects. Their comprehensive vision incorporates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) an increase in student learning.                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) the culture of commitment to increase achievement and success for all students</li> <li>b.) sense of which areas need to be targeted (i.e. literacy achievement lags behind math)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2.) a deepening of student learning                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) dream of providing apprentice professional development to support teachers to provide higher quality instruction</li> <li>b.) literacy specialists will act as a liaison between the school and afterschool programs to ensure cohesive instruction</li> <li>c.) ability to find and retain highly qualified teachers</li> </ol> </li> <li>3.) personalized student support and learning                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) literacy specialists to provide intensive instruction for struggling students</li> <li>b.) online data management system</li> </ol> </li> <li>4.) common and individual tasks based on student interest                             <p>(not evident)</p> </li> </ol> <p>Because of the overall vision of Johnson City School District, this section scores in the low end of the high range. They have addressed most points in this section.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>JCSD has defined the process of choosing participating schools to participate in the grant initiatives as part of the activities in their high-quality plan and identified all schools in their district as being in need.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The district has 49.4% students receiving free and reduced lunches and all 11 district schools will participate in the plan in order to be fair and equitable to all.</li> <li>b. Due to the numbers of disadvantaged students, JCSD will closely monitor progress on those students in particular.</li> <li>c. Schools are listed with categories of students defined.</li> </ol> <p>Because of the complete reporting of the populations impacted by the grant, this section scores in the high range.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>1. JCSD's proposal will impact the entire district and has potential to become meaningful reform.</p> <p>a. The fact that it is aligned with existing educational initiatives in the state of Tennessee, support the idea that it will be of lasting consequence.</p> <p>b. It was designed by multiple stakeholders (teachers, academic coaches, community partners, etc.)</p> <p>c. It is based on some research-based principles (Newman, Marks, and Gamoran, 1996)</p> <p>The plan put forth by JCSD represents change to the status quo, but is lacking one component of Absolute Priority #1.. It does not have explicit details about how it will channel learning based on student academic interests. This section scores in the low end of the high range.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>JCSD's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance.</p> <p>1. Student performance on state summative assessments has been relatively strong and now JCSD is doubling efforts to address targeted populations within the district.</p> <p>a.) The infusion of literacy specialists acting as student support and building-based staff development for all staff may help increase the power of teaching and learning that goes on in JCSD schools. This is a key goal in JCSD's high-quality plan.</p> <p>b.)The addition of an administrator to concentrate on the use of data in the district and another as curriculum support for the principal</p> <p>c.) The cohesion of using the AMO from the state</p> <p>d.) The history of success that Johnson City SD has shown on the state exams</p> <p>e.) Existing partnerships with community resources (HEROES program, Frontier Health, etc.)</p> <p>There are some concerns</p> <p>1.) That there seems to be a scattered approach to assessment in the district. (DIBELS, Pearson, TRC) and that the assessments are not focused on deepening student learning as much as they are measuring isolated skills.</p> <p>2.) That the target for improving the graduation rate is not ambitious enough (.6% annual increase)</p> <p>Because of the strengths and challenges yet facing JCSD and outlined here, this section earns a middle range score.</p>		
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**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	9

<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>1. JCSD has a record of student achievement success and in its lowest performing schools in particular.</p> <p>a.) Scores are consistently higher than the state average. (letter from state indicates that JCSD scored 2nd highest in the state in math and 5th highest in reading)</p> <p>b.) Two schools have won awards for their successful programs.</p> <p>c.) Gains on the state test last year in the lowest performing schools were commendable. (Language Arts + 4% and Math +6%)</p>		
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2. It is not evident that there is a track record of improvement over the past 4 years.

a.) They have been accredited to offer IB World School courses since 2008, but there is no mention of trying to increase the number of students taking those to strengthen those programs in their lowest performing schools.

b.) With the implementation of PowerSchool for grades 6-12 parents, students and teachers to view school progress, there is no indicator that shows this tool is expanding to all grades and that it has made a difference in improving participation or instruction at JCSD.

c.) No inclusion of state test scores for each district school makes it difficult to prove a case of improvement over the past 4 years.

Because of the areas of success, but yet a limited response to this section (no clear record of success on state tests), the score falls into the middle category.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The JCSD is transparent in the expenditure information it provides to its stakeholders. This is a key goal in their high-quality plan.

- 1.) There is a school district policy addressing this and the salaries of staff are available and updated yearly on the website.
- 2.) Proposed budgets are posted on the district website.

Because of the clear effort to be transparent, this score is in the high category.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

JCSD has sufficient autonomy and support from the other governing authorities it deals with to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

1. The support JCSD receives in the way of a framework for measuring success from the state has helped the district craft a plan for improvement to meet the state goals defined in that framework. Having benchmarks to measure progress is one deliverable in a high-quality plan.
2. Other support for the JCSD initiative comes in the form of funding and guidelines for school operation from the state, but this connection with outside governing entities puts no limitation on the design of the JCSD plan.

Because of the clear disclosure and explanation of the conditions and autonomy allowed the JCSD by the state of Tennessee, this section scores in the top range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. JCSD clearly values meaningful stakeholder engagement as it plans for its district.

a. There is evidence that multiple stakeholders provided ideas and then discussed and reviewed the synthesis of ideas.

b. There is a thoughtful process of idea-gathering that sets this application apart from others. (i.e. template to gather ideas from teachers and administrators, coaches examining data and identifying researched-based methods, community stakeholder meeting with the superintendent to plan for sustainability, etc.)

2. JCSD has done an exemplary job gathering endorsements for their plan with multiple stakeholders.

a. Not only have many people and organizations had input and/or been informed of the JCSD plan, but there is also evidence that these stakeholders are committed to the sustainability of the plan after the grant period is over. (i.e. letters from City

Manager, executive of Frontier Health, Chief of Police, etc.)

Because of the outstanding process and evidence of it cited here, this section is scored at the high level.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

**Current Status**

1. JCSD has evaluated their current status on achievement based on state testing and graduation rates. Because the state of Tennessee has defined the expectations not only in terms of benchmarks, but also in terms of growth on state tests, JCSD chose to align the evaluation of their current status with the state's expectations. By using the state's assessment criteria, JCSD is able to identify needs and gaps in its district that coincide with state's process. Using benchmarks to identify needs and gaps and also measure progress is one indicator in their high-quality plan.

There is not a description of their current status in implementing a personalized learning environment.

2. The logic in their plan is predominantly to hire additional personnel to address the needs they see in their district. This solution may be difficult to maintain over the long-term as new students are coming through the system yearly and always need support of some kind.

- a. Needs of closing gaps in all subgroups and increasing graduation rates

Solution is to hire extra personnel such as Academic Specialists, Coaches, Reduction Gap Assistants, Student Reduction Teachers, etc.

- b. Gaps may exist, but there is no documentation as to what specific subgroup and what the existing gaps are.

Because of the incomplete documentation and explanation of details in this section, it scores in the low range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The JCSD has indicators in the proposed plan that promote effective learning that will engage and empower learners. Measureable benchmarks are one hallmark of a high-quality plan.

a. Students and parents receive feedback on progress although this is not always in the form of timely and specific feedback necessary for students to focus on meaningful personal goals.

b. There is some link between the information students receive on careers ( the Explore and Plan testing, annual career days in elementary schools, annual community career fair) and actual requirements of the world of work, but these events and activities are too infrequent and shallow to expose students to the myriad of 21st century jobs that await them. The students could make some decisions on a career choice with this level of information.

c. The collaborative programs with institutions of higher learning are representative of one step JCSD has taken to deepen student learning for its population. This district also has multiple ways of expanding student exposure to diverse cultures and community members. In particular, those students involved in the IB program get a rich experience to deepen their learning.

d. There is a wide-ranging effort in the district and the state of Tennessee to improve the quality of teachers and administrators. Through participating in this and including their own supports for new and existing teachers, JCSD is making progress in that area.

There is little evidence of the following in this submission

- 1. students develop skills to work in teams, persevere, become creative problem-solvers

- 2. students experience a personally designed sequence of instructional content
- 3. students are frequently able to pursue experiences in areas of their academic interest
- 4. all students have frequent access to their updated assessment information that shows progress toward mastery of standards.

Because of the strengths coupled with the missing information in this section, a score middle range is given.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is clear in the application submitted that the JCSD values human capital.

1. The Johnson City School District demonstrates strong commitment to develop and support teachers and leaders in order to improve student learning.

a. Building on their existing success with literacy coaches, JCSD is adding more and expanding the scope of their position to enhance in-house staff development. One example of the impact of the coaches is to model lessons that inform teachers how to better personalize learning for students and address their academic needs and interests. Instructional coaches are also a catalyst for translating data into changes in instructional practice for individuals and for the staff as a whole. Through their frequent contact and collaboration with each individual teacher, they provide feedback to teachers on a regular basis and provide classroom and/or building support for improved instructional practices. Through the coach, teachers are linked to high-quality instructional approaches and resources. This on-site catalyst of change (the coach) is an important part of continuously improving schools and improving student achievement.

b. There is a myriad of evidence that the adults in the JCSD use data to inform their decisions and that collaboration is one of the main avenues this district takes to elevate the kind of teaching and leading that goes on in the district.

c. The tools used to inform these decisions are comprehensive and transparent. The Johnson City staff has embraced the model of teacher and leader evaluations used across the state of Tennessee and uses those to measure the quality of their professional responsibilities as well as to target support for areas of professional need. This use of benchmarks to measure progress is an indicator of a high-quality plan.

2. Johnson City SD demonstrates the collaborative nature of learning and has created that kind of culture throughout the district to support improvement.

a. The instructional coaching model is always dependent on strong relationships throughout the system to be successful. The fact that JCSD has already experienced some success with this model is evidence that this kind of culture is already established and can be expanded with success.

b. Supports for new teachers in the form of mentors is another example of the way JCSD values collaboration.

3. There is a policy that addresses hard to staff schools in the JCSD.

Because of the comprehensive nature of the response to aspects described in this section, a high score in the high range is attained.

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

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The JCSD has multiple practices in place that facilitate personalized student learning.

1. The organizational structure of the district and district policies provide support to the focus on individualizing instruction. Resources and personnel have been allocated with this goal in mind.
2. The site-based school leadership teams have been functioning autonomously to design any necessary changes for implementing the vision disseminated by the district. One example is the flexible scheduling of reading specialists to accommodate extra support for targeted students in afterschool programs.
3. Students at the middle and high schools have been given multiple opportunities to earn credit by demonstrating mastery. (i.e. credit recovery, dual enrollment, online learning, homebound, etc.)
4. Although the initiatives listed above address the multiple opportunities a student has to demonstrate mastery to earn credit, the concept of providing multiple times and multiple ways to show mastery within a class stems from the use of standards-based grading which has not been mentioned.
5. The idea of providing resources and practices that are adaptable and accessible for all students is not fully addressed in this response. The discussion of the Response to Intervention Team is who would provide discussion and solutions on this topic, but the submission does not mention what some of the district resources and practices are.

Because of the mix of thorough and missing responses, this section earned a score in the middle range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Johnson City School District has taken steps to ensure all stakeholders have access to materials and technology they need to support student learning.

1. By providing in-school access to technology and having supportive community partners, students from low-income families have the essential learning tools during the school day. There is one issue not addressed and this is how families who are low-income have access to all of the learning tools and information available to parents and students on the district website. If there is no plan to support technology use outside of the school setting for those students, they do not have the same learning opportunities as others.
2. Through the addition of a technology support person, JCSD enhances the way teachers and students are able to adapt and learn new uses for technology in the classroom. The additional mobile computer labs and focus on teacher collaboration give avenues of learning about technology.
3. JCSD has thoughtfully planned for the technology system they use so it integrates with systems used by other stakeholders.
4. On a grander scale, JCSD has an interoperable data system that links school and district data with state-wide systems. This ensures that there is a free flow of information that can be analyzed and accessed on many levels. Providing this kind of data system was a key goal in their high-quality plan.

Because of the solid responses described in this section, the score falls in the high range.

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

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Johnson City School District has an extensive plan for ensuring continuous improvement.

1. Through many forums of communication that they have established to keep all stakeholders abreast of progress so that adjustments to the plan can be made if data indicates this is necessary, JCSD ensure that there will be continuous improvement.

a. The site-based management teams in schools are empowered with flexibility to change and have first-hand knowledge of issues that are and are not working according to the intent of the plan. By identifying the site teams as responsible parties, JCSD is exemplifying a high-quality plan.

b. The frequency of communication throughout the year with various stakeholder groups at all levels of the organization (school board, parents, community members, coaches, etc.) promotes continuous reflection on the part of district leaders who hold these meetings.

2. The myriad of assessment tools that are being used to gather feedback promote close monitoring of progress by adults of the grant goals from an academic standpoint. (quarterly benchmark tests, tri-annual assessments, annual state assessments, etc.)

a. A concern is that there is no tool to measure feedback from the staff about the impact of the effectiveness of all the additional positions/personnel that will be added to the district as part of this plan. It is one thing for the principal to evaluate/monitor the effectiveness of the persons in these new positions, but it is another to have staff evaluate whether the position is needed as the years of the grant unfold.

Because of the overall vision of gathering feedback for monitoring continuous improvement, this section receives a score in the high range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a district that takes elaborate steps to ensure there is adequate means of communication in their district.

1. The impact of having a district communications committee shows the attention to this effort JCSD has given.

(monthly meetings of various groups, website updates, school-based information, newsletters, enhanced phone system, tours, etc.)

By identifying the parties responsible for communication, JCSD is exemplifying a high-quality plan.

2. The fact that increased communication is part of the district strategic plan again highlights their awareness of the importance of keeping their stakeholders informed.

Because of the strong communication structure that JCSD has built into their system, this section earns a high range score.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The JCSD has identified over 14 performance measures that will guide their implementation of the plan.

1. With targets for academic improvement derived from the state AMO system, JCSD has outlined their plan for improvement.

a. Although measureable and consistent, the targets for improvement for all students seem to be low (i.e. 1-2% growth) and not in line with the "ambitious yet achievable" conditions that are described in the grant requirements. For some performance measures (i.e. ELA on TCAP 3-8 and English II), the targets for subgroups (4%) seem to be more in line with the intent of the grant.

b. There is also concern that some of the performance measures are not rigorous themselves (i.e. DIBELS) and that the information gathered across the district is not cohesive and coherent. (i.e. DIBELS given in K-1, TRC in grade 2 only)

2. The monitoring of the non-cognitive aspects of the JCSD plan are based on information from the HEROES data.

a. Although this plan for monitoring would yield consistent information, the rationale for increasing mental health referrals by 5% each year does not logically lead to improved outcomes. The effectiveness of the treatment would not necessarily be measured with the current JCSD plan.

This section scores in the low middle range as the information asked for is provided, but the lack of ambitious goals is a major factor in this plan.

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

JCSD has a multi-layered plan for evaluating the effectiveness of their investments.

a. The frequency and levels of monitoring and evaluating are impressive. (i.e. monthly meetings with outside stakeholders; monthly meetings with academic coaches, interventionists, teachers; weekly meetings with administration; daily walk-throughs in classrooms, logs from professional development, etc.)

b. The additional layer of a cost analysis to monitor cost per child served against the success of the program as seen in data gathered will yield important information as JCSD proceeds from year to year. This is an activity that has a rationale and is one indicator this is a high-quality plan.

Because of the thorough explanation and plan laid out for evaluating the effectiveness of their investments, this section earns a high score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget and narrative provided by JCSD is thoughtful and realistic.

1. It uses a mix of local and community funds along with new grant monies to craft a viable budget for both the short term and long term. (i.e. Rapid Housing Program, system-wide interpreter, etc. )

2. Because it is building on its past success with the coaching model for staff development and district support positions, the planning for the additional personnel and costs involved for the multiple new personnel described in the grant are adequate and reasonable.

3. Because the grant required the description to provide specific total revenue from each identified funding source and that information is not provided, this section scores in the middle range. It is difficult to determine if the total funding from these local and community sources is adequate without estimates being provided here.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Johnson City has a strong plan to support the viability of the grant initiatives after the funding period expires. This lends credence to the sustainability of the initiatives.

1. The partnership and trust district administrators have with the community, has led to common understanding and benefits.

a. Because of the involvement with the city, there is a concerted effort between the district and community leaders to seek a tax referendum to add to existing district revenues that would support some aspects of the JCSD RTTD vision after the grant is over.

2. The succession plan for personnel such as infusing reading specialists into existing classroom teaching positions is one way that JCSD has thoughtfully tried to capitalize on the benefits that the grant funds provided. This is evidence of the reasonable timeline JCSD laid out during its implementation discussion. The reading specialists' expertise will not only impact the students and classroom teachers during the years of the grant, but will have a lasting impact on the whole JCSD after the grant ends. This is due to the fact that the students served by those specialists will improve in reading achievement and probably in other

areas and that competence will carry them through multiple years of their education. The specialists will also impact current classroom teachers by modeling effective instruction. This type of collegial staff development will impact the classroom teachers' practices long after the end of the grant. In addition, the JCSD plan to have those specialists become classroom teachers after the grant will allow that effective instruction to permeate the entire school as they continue to work along side other colleagues in new and powerful ways.

3. Support from state and local government leaders is evident in the letters to back the JCSD plan. Although there was no commitment of financial backing from the state, the fact that JCSD had been chosen as only 4 of 17 districts asking for support throughout the state speaks to the respect JCSD has on the state level.

Because of the evidence of commitment from the state and local leaders as provided in this section, but the lack of financial commitment from the state, this section scores in the high middle range.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The JCSD has a proven record of how they are able to successfully integrate community services within the framework of their educational setting.

1. The partnership they have developed with the mental health community through the HEROES program stands as a testament to the comprehensive and successful integrative service that can be provided to the targeted students and families in the JCSD. Since the grant is funding all schools in the district, the services provided by HEROES will not need to be scaled up because all students are eligible for service if they need it.

a. Their application describes the decrease in achievement gaps as one indicator of success as well as numbers of students served by this mental health program. Using benchmarks to measure progress is one element of a high-quality plan like this one from JCSD.

b. Although the "rigorous evaluation methodology" used by the Core Management Team to measure progress was mentioned, there is no detailed description of what that involves and what targets the JCSD is trying to achieve to prove success.

2. There is evidence that this HEROES program has already impacted staff (training on Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Parent Child Interaction Therapy) and will be able to further build capacity in staff to work better with the targeted students. (additional training on risk behaviors)

3. The application describes multiple assessments (logs, tracking data, etc.) for measuring progress toward targets for the students in need of mental health support. There is no indicator of how to track the impact of support for Hispanic families.

Because of the wide-ranging scope of this partnership and how its impact has been measured over the years of implementation, this section of the application documents aspects of the competitive preference priority. Scoring falls in the low-end of the high range.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Johnson City School District's plan meets all of the requirements for Absolute Priority I.

1. The personalization of the learning environment through the impact of coaching and other support personnel on students is clearly laid out.

2. The accountability that is woven throughout their plan is designed to measure success on multiple levels and is a key factor in their ability to build a culture of data-driven decision-making across their district and community.
  
3. The use of technology to support student learning is incorporated in the plan Johnson City designed.
  
4. The extraordinary community partnerships that JCSD has established are key in its ability to deliver a sustainable program and improve student success both academically and socially/ emotionally. This is clearly described in their high-quality plan.
  
5. By taking the steps necessary to develop and support this dream of what schools can be, Johnson City has provided evidence that the integration of technology, building-based leadership, embedded staff development, community resources and the existing framework of schools are all important ingredients in increased student learning that leads to thriving communities.

Total	210	156
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	2

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The plan for this optional budget supplement is weak for several reasons:

1. The budgeted amount exceeds the \$2 million limit.
2. The plan does include a co-developed program with another LEA.
3. Although job-embedded staff development is an extremely important piece of raising educator effectiveness, the amount budgeted for technology training over the 4 years of the grant seems excessive for just one entity and single purpose.
4. Finally, although this proposal could be replicated across other schools, it does not represent the kind of innovative solution that is the intent of the grant.

Because of the factors listed above, the score is in the low range.



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0470TN-2 for Johnson City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
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(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has articulated an ambitious comprehensive and coherent reform vision that is based on several year's worth of work at the local community and state levels. The vision is comprehensive and articulated plans for implementation are convincing.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All schools and, thereby, all students will be included in the implementation of the applicant's RTTD grant activities. Collectively they meet the competition's eligibility requirements. All schools will take part with emphasis on the lowest achieving schools. Data is provided for all schools PreK through 12th grade.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A convincing ambitious plan has been presented in the narrative. Evidence exists in awards and collaborations to support innovation and strong student support. The thoroughly developed proposal will provide the applicant with the ability to reach the districts identified outcomes.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) JCSD has based its goals on evidence-based data collected and presented in multiple formats in the appendices, including summative assessments.</p> <p>(b) The district has identified each student that is part of the achievement gap in each building. The vision is achievable and details are substantial explaining the methods to be used to eliminate the gaps that presently exist.</p> <p>(c) JCSD has a leave no child behind vision when it comes to graduation rates. Over 90% now graduate and their vision is that 100% will graduate.</p> <p>(d) College enrollment, while impressive, shows gaps for specific subgroups. JCSD has as part of their proposal goals and a vision that is ambitious and achievable.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Three of the JCSD schools have received awards for improved student achievement at the highest levels.</p> <p>(b) The entire district has embraced the new rigorous standards set forth by the State and has met the challenge. JCSD is number 5 in the state for student achievement even with the diversity challenges they embrace.</p> <p>(c) JCSD teachers in school-based decision making groups use data collected from Tennessee Valley Value added Assessment System to make decisions to provide significant reforms. Student achievement increases demonstrates a commitment to excellence within the district. In addition, data is available through websites and media reports to the parents and other community members.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

JCSD has in place an exhaustive method for transparency in reporting personnel salaries. The district's website contains this information. Budgeting is done annually at the school level by staff as well as parents and community members. A quarterly report is made to the City Commission.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Successful conditions and sufficient autonomy exist under State, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the PLE described in the applicant's proposal through: Those laws and ordinances are:

Local Ordinance No. 3194,

Article XXIII of the Johnson City Charter,

Tennessee Code Annotated #49-2-203. and

School District Board Legal Status Policies 1,100, 1,101, and 12,705.

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

10

9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

A robust endeavor was in place to receive input and feedback from every key stakeholder group including:

- Teachers and administrators were given a "dream big" template to provide feedback
- System wide academic coaches had design meetings to research student data and best practices
- Local community members met with the Superintendent to develop a sustainability plan
- Regular administrative meetings were held to update plans
- Principals and Central Office administrators met with site-based teams to support efforts to close achievement gaps
- Johnson City Education Association Council and at monthly luncheons provided input
- Parents are on site-based councils at each school
- Surveys were posted on the district's website to gather community feedback
- ELL parents had a special meeting to gather feedback
- Letters of support have been submitted from high school students
- Letter of support from the Mayor and The State Commissioner for Education.

There was no mention of higher education support.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district used data from the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), DIBELS Next reading assessments and TRC scores. School-based teams used the data from their school and researched best practices to improve and develop the proposal for RTTD.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a)The narrative is exhaustive in its description of how all students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;</li> <li>(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals and understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals;</li> <li>(iii) Are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest;</li> </ul>		

(iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning; and

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

(b) With the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to—

The process for a student to access a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready begins in kindergarten at JCSD with data collected from DIBELS Next and TRC(Test, Reading and Comprehension) data collected and shared with parents multiple times throughout the year. Data collection moves on to TCAPS and Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System to identify individual student growth. Then a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments are put in place by teachers who have received specific training to assist individual students with the aid of academic coaches.

Teachers meet with students to train them on how to apply their individual data to manage their learning and academic goals. While digital learning and communication is used the proposal would expand this aspect of the innovative programming at JCSD.

On-going feedback occurs at all levels and with all groups and individuals who need the information to make informed decisions about students' academic needs and with students to assist them in making informed decisions about their own learning goals.

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

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a) Teachers have or will have academic coaches to imbed the professional development necessary to implement to PLE proposed by JCSD. The training teachers receive mirrors the personal learning environment for students. Eastern Chemical Company's Mathletes professional development is one example of on-going teacher training geared to meet the needs identified by student achievement data.

(b) Extensive professional development has been completed and is planned to enlist all systems and practices necessary to provide support to each student. The narrative shows a district prepared to expand the PLE that is already in place to meet the needs of EVERY child based on data.

(c) Systems are in place to evaluate teachers and administrators using the State developed evaluation protocols. The data is used to identify teachers' strengths so that strong teachers may support teachers with specific needs with the ultimate goal to increase student achievement.

(d) The applicant has in place strong, ambitious strategies to increase teacher effectiveness in all areas of the curriculum and in all schools. A collaboration is in place to partner with higher education to prepare effective teachers.

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

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The central office is lean compared to other systems in the area in an attempt to spend more funds to support students academic needs. Support and services will be provided throughout the grant period as requested by site-based management teams based on student data

(b) Each school has autonomy for all aspects of the school's programming including budget development.

(c) While multiple opportunities exist for students to gain credits, there was no convincing explanation of opportunities students have to "earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic." This lowered your score.

(d) Students are given multiple ways and multiple times to earn credits for graduation.

(e) Full attention will be given to students with disabilities and English language learning students through the grant proposal.

Opportunities exist, but JCSD sees this as a weak area for the district.

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

(a) District policy 6,709 provides access to all students, parents, educators, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.

(b) The proposal describes an increase in technical access for students, on-line testing results available to families, a technical coach for teachers and families and a system wide interpreter to increase technical support to limited English proficient families and students (Policy 4,406).

(c) Exportation of data for parent and student use include: mGradebook, a parent/student portal in PowerSchool giving parents and students access to student data anywhere, anytime; Infosnap allows on-line information registration so parents do not have to fill out paperwork manually and can be shared across the district for families with students in multiple buildings; The School Messenger provides immediate information for parents during emergencies; in addition there are numerous learning resources and electronic tutoring available.

(d) PowerSchool is an interoperable data system used by the district extensively.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

An extensive plan is presented in this proposal with very specific strategies to engage a continuous improvement process. Extensive data analysis, research strategies and identification of solutions, if necessary has been put in place at each school. The unique school-based autonomy will allow for unique interventions as necessary to ensure success.

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

The plan for communication, as presented in this narrative, is extensive, comprehensive, and ambitious in scope and outreach to all constituents of the school and community.

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

Sixteen performance measures have been identified. Performance measures were developed using the State's Annual Measurable Objectives for academic growth with a focus on closing achievement gaps. Social/emotional performance measures have been identified, as well.

Details justifying the rationale, how the measures will be used and how the measures will be revised, if necessary, has been thoroughly provided.

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

Data analysis will be done weekly at all levels of the organization to determine effectiveness of reform measures..

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Funds to support the program will come from the RTTD grant and local school funds, Title I funds, Johnson City Juvenile Court, Frontier Health, and Johnson City Police Department.</p> <p>(b) A reasonable plan for sustainability has been offered in the narrative.</p> <p>(c) A thoughtful rationale with specific input from multi sources has been applied to the budget request with a clear eye to sustainability and how that will be accomplished.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>State, local, and Federal funding has been allocated to ensure success of the project. The City Commission of Johnson City are seeking a tax increase to ensure sustainability of the program after the grant funds period has expired.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All aspects have been thoughtfully and exhaustively presented and discussed with the exception of higher education involvement. Lower points have been awarded because there is no plan for higher ed involvement..</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Absolute Priority 1 has been addressed throughout the proposal. Raytown has taken what it has learned from past practice and improved student achievement to structure a high-quality plan for implementation of personal learning environments where each student learns anytime and anyplace. Student achievement for EVERY student appears to be the guiding principal of the planning.</p>		

Total	210	204
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The request has a rationale and is adequate but is not extended to another district.</p>		



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0470TN-3 for Johnson City Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant creates a comprehensive and coherent vision for district-wide improvement. The applicant discussed in great length what they have put in place to help move the district forward, and mentioned how the RTT grant could accelerate their growth, but did not explicitly state what would be possible only if the grant were attained.

The applicant did a good job overall in addressing the four core educational assurance areas and an exceptional job in discussing the adoption of standards, data systems, and recruiting and retaining effective employees.

- The applicant adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2011 and has been working through curricular adjustments and adaptations since that time, inclusive of creating rigorous local assessment.
- The applicant refers to leadership provided by the district in building data systems to monitor student growth and data among all stake holders
- The applicant speaks directly at length regarding their strategy, ability, and willingness to recruit and retain high quality teachers. The progressive Differentiated Pay Plan directly aligns to the intent of significant education reform.
- The application did not directly discuss strategies to turn around low achieving schools. However, the applicant did address achievement gaps and subject area gaps. The focus was more on the totality of the issue rather than specific schools.

The applicant articulates 'dreams' for accelerating student achievement, but without precise, measurable goals.

- While the vision did call specifically for increasing equity and closing achievement gaps, little attention was paid in particular to providing personal support, giving students more choice in their learning, and systematically differentiating student learning opportunities.

Overall, this section rates in the high middle section of scores. While some criteria were not addressed, the overall vision was coherent and directly addressed many of the four areas of educational assurance.

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

The applicant thoroughly explained that all schools in the district would be participating in the 'system-wide' reform if they were to be a recipient of the RTT grant. The applicant also acknowledged in the narrative segment of this criterion that some schools have a higher percentage of high need students and have a history of lower student achievement. The applicant expresses that those schools will receive first priority in moving forward with reform.

Since all schools were selected they met the requirements as outlined in the RTT-D competition.

All participating schools are listed and their demographics provided in the provided chart. The chart was completed accurately

and in totality.

All components of this criterion were addressed directly and completely resulting in a maximum rating for this section of the application.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a well thought-out strategy for moving forward, however, the narrative did not touch on many aspects of a high quality plan.

- The applicant provides five areas of focus that are designed most specifically to help increase achievement amongst the district's lowest achieving schools.
- Within the five major areas uneven details and planning are exhibited. When discussing personnel additions very specific numbers with thorough explanations are provided. In areas such as professional development, however, the proposed outline of activities is considerably vaguer.
- Within all elements of the plan no timelines, measurable goals, or people responsible for carrying out the plan were identified.

The application discussed partnerships and reforms that will extend beyond the lowest achieving schools and can impact all students attending any school throughout the district. Such partnerships include working with Frontier Health and using the Rapid Housing Program.

The application does a good job of linking their goals and vision to research explaining how such changes will positively impact student achievement. One specific example in the application cites McLaughlin and Drori as part of the rationale for adding content area specialists in an effort to help close the achievement gap.

Overall, this section rates in the middle section of middle. While many key components are addressed thoroughly, many components of a high quality plan were not embedded as part of the narrative for this criterion.

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

The applicant directly addressed the need for increased equity in terms of student achievement. The plan that was put forth was complete and appeared to be achievable, but could have been more ambitious.

- There was no direct mention within the narrative as to whether the stated were equivalent to that established through ESEA.
- The narrative portion mentioned that the district was among the five highest achieving districts in the state of Tennessee already.
- The district used state-wide summative assessments and DIBELS testing in grades without a state-wide assessment to measure students' performance.
- Based on the data collected, significant achievement gaps exist between the overall student population and high need students (SEL, low SES, black or Hispanic)
- The stated goals through the application directly mentioning trying to close the achievement gap. However, at the end of SY 2016-2017 the achievement gap will be at 11 percent for racial minorities and 20 percent for socioeconomically disadvantaged for students IF they meet their goals. Such a plan is not ambitious in nature considering that the original gaps were not more than ten to fifteen percentage points higher.

The applicant discusses graduation rate and college entrance information. The data from the district in these areas is very strong in total, but gaps still exist. Under the proposed plan those gaps would close significantly by SY 2016-2017.

Overall, this criterion rates in the high end of middle. The data collected and analyzed was appropriate and the goals as stated apply directly to equity and are achievable. The score could have been higher with more ambitious goals established.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does a very good job of detailing the longitudinal success of the district.

- Many of the successes and growth discussed were more recent than four years, but the applicant explains a change in the testing system provided an outlier set of data that after SY 2008-2009 making a more longitudinal analysis difficult to provide.
- The applicant discussed specific successes including recognitions for individual schools at the state and national levels.
- The applicant provides measures of success in both English Language Arts and Math over the past three years as well as incremental success in closing achievement gaps. Thus, the success was both among and between subgroups.
- The application gives many examples of shrinking achievement gaps but refers specifically to economically disadvantaged students and LEP students making the most progress since 2010.
- The application discussed a very successful high school graduation rate, and also discussed their goals for continued improvement over their already impressive performance.

The application noted that there have been ambitious and significant reforms in order to improve the efforts of all students, inclusive of paying additional attention to those students who are typically underserved.

- The application discussed specific measures taken to support typically underperforming schools through school autonomy, increased Title money, partnerships with universities, and increased personnel to support the delivery of curricula.

The application discussed how data was made available via their website for school-level information and parents and students could access personal data at the click of a button via their Student Information System (SIS), PowerSchool.

Overall, this portion of the application scores in the high end of the high segment of scores. All elements asked to be addressed in this criterion were and done so with adequate support and detail to describe true longitudinal success for the applicant.

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

The applicant has demonstrated transparency through their communication of financial matters with stakeholders and through their policies demanding such transparency always occur. Failure to be transparent would thus violate their own district policies that were discussed in the narrative and provided in the Appendix.

- All personnel salaries are posted on the school website.

- Budgets are constructed at the school level and fit into the larger district-level budget. Both levels of budgeting are available for public consumption.
- Financial reports and receipts are turned in to the City Commission and other proactive and thorough bookkeeping policies have been set in place in the applicant's district.

The applicant will receive a full allotment of points for this criterion as they have satisfied all components as described scoring guide.

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

The applicant provided evidence and rationale that indicate the district has sufficient autonomy under state law within regulatory requirements to create the suggested reform within their district.

- The narrative provided outlines the history of school governance in the area as well as outlining state code and policies set forth governing the Board of Education for the district.
- The rules of governance as a school district provide sufficient autonomy to implement the educational reform as proposed.

The applicant will receive the full amount of points for this criterion as a result of the depth and thorough nature of the narrative response.

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

The application in its entirety and the narrative for this criterion in particular do a good job of explaining how the district sought out meaningful stakeholder support and engagement.

- The applicant described the collaborative process that was completed in order to produce a RTT grant proposal.
- The collaborative process included parents, teachers, community members, building level administration and Central Office administration. Students, however, were not mentioned as part of this process.
- The collective bargaining unit signed off on the proposed plan indicating support.

The application showed community involvement with letters of support from:

- Parent or parent organizations
- City officials
- Prominent local business people
- State politicians
- Administrators at institutions of higher education

This criterion will be scored at the maximum level.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application failed to demonstrate evidence of a high quality plan being in place to conduct an analysis of the current status in implementing personal learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal.

- The applicant noted that the state helps LEAs to determine the gaps that exist in each school and within each district.
- The applicant also noted the goals they have moving forward to close such achievement gaps.
- The application failed to produce a timeline of events, activities, and people responsible for carrying out activities to analyze why students were achieving at the level they currently were.

In creating a plan for moving forward, the district did a nice job of analyzing their own data to best understand their current status.

The recommendations for activities moving forward dealt largely with research that indicates that quality instruction improves student performance. The goals for improving instruction, however, largely revolve around hiring more staff. This plan is not complete and may not be sustainable over an extended period of time.

Overall, this criterion ranks in the middle of the middle range. The applicant did a good job of analyzing their current situation and establishing goals moving forward. However, the plan was not comprehensive in nature and does not outline how execution of the plan should take place.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not produce a coherent high quality plan commenting on how they would be implementing instructional strategies to support all kids in reaching the goal of being college and career ready.

- The majority of the application discussed what reforms had already taken place in district and mentioned the district's future 'dreams'
- At no point in the narrative for this criterion did the applicant provide timelines, deliverables, or people responsible for ensuring that the district could accomplish their 'dreams'
- The applicant did provide evidence of several successful programs already in place to help support students being college and career ready that also serve to personalize the learning environment. AP, IB, Employability Skills Coaching, access to Asian language instruction, and virtual classrooms are great programs that support creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century, personalized, learning environment.

The applicant discusses the support it has received from parents and teachers in the reforms that have already commenced and the reforms outlined in the RTT grant proposal. While this was mentioned, significant evidence of how the support has been garnered was discussed.

- Within the narrative for this criterion that was not direct mention that parents and/or teachers had a firm understanding or ability to identify learning and goals linked to CCSS and a college preparatory curriculum.
- No direct mention of appeal to diverse learning interests or offering students the opportunity to move at the speed of mastery rather than the calendar took place.
- The applicant did talk of strategies used to support non-assessed skills such as: goal-setting, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving but without a direct connection to parent and teacher understanding and support of this process.

The applicant's plan did not provide a strategy to ensure personalized learning sequences for all kids or access to digital content for all kids. Opportunities for virtual learning and outside opportunities seemed reserved for kids who are excelling or struggling. At various times in the application it discusses the 'dream' of having all students take a college-level course while

in district, but then discussed contradictory policies shortly thereafter (must take an Honors course first or score a 19 on the ACT.)

The applicant thoroughly addressed the collection, analysis, and use of data to support and drive instruction and student course selection.

No specific mention of interventions to support student learning in any systematic manner occurred.

There was also not a high quality plan developed to demonstrate how students would be trained to best understand and utilize tools being given to them through advanced data tracking and the ability to better course manage.

Overall this criterion falls in the low-middle portion of middle. Many great things were discussed in the narrative; however, they did not form a coherent plan. In addition, many components that should have been addressed in this criterion were omitted.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application demonstrates that all district educators participate in training to support professional capacity building. The linkage to building professional capacity in order to better implement personal learning environments is loose, but present throughout the narrative for this criterion.

- The applicant states that a comprehensive plan exists to provide training on CCSS, individualized education, data analysis, and teaching strategies consistent with their nearly adopted teacher evaluation system. The narrative then discusses the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and how it is used to help drive professional development in the district.
- The application strongly supports the district’s assertion that through increased teacher support and training will come increased student achievement.
- The application states that not only does the district have an overall professional development plan, but also plans specific to grade and subject levels.
- The application did not make direction mention of adopting content and instruction in order to meet the individual needs of students or the individual academic interests of students in any detailed or comprehensive manner.
- The narrative discussed providing training in terms of data usage and improved practice in many different ways. One specific instance discussed the use of data from evaluations at all levels to drive improvement efforts for administrators and teachers.

The narrative for this criterion details how training will be provided to ensure all educators know and are able to use tools (digital), data, complex feedback

- The applicant deals with data and how it will be interpreted and disseminated by adding personnel. The application states that, particularly at the high school level, academic specialists will be responsible for serving in the capacity of a data coach.

The application directly addresses how schools and school leaders will have the ability to use information from the teacher evaluation system to drive professional development and use data analysis to train staff on how to most efficiently eliminate the achievement gap. There was no explicit, detailed mention of using information from surveys to guide decision-making in terms of building and district climate and culture.

The district has a protocol in place to attract highly effective teachers to the most needy schools and students. While this was not presented as a high quality plan in the application, the ideas are progressive and original.

Overall, the application was rated in the high-middle area of the middle category. Many components of this criterion were addressed in great detail and reveal a great plan for implementation. Other areas, however, were not mentioned at all, and some with glaring deficiencies. The focus on personal learning environments – the absolute priority – seemed to fade from focus in this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant directly addresses nearly each component and subcomponent of this criterion.

- The LEA provided the organizational structure for Central Office and typical chain of command currently in place. While it appears that the infrastructure exists to support the proposed educational reform, the narrative failed to specifically mention people responsible for the implementation of change. Instead, vague wording was used basically confirming that authority and responsibility on the project ultimately rests with the Superintendent.
- The applicant did discuss the ability of school leadership teams to have autonomy and flexibility in instituting reform. Much of what has been written throughout the application dealing with site-based leadership demonstrates that this decision is directly aligned with district philosophy.
- The applicant addressed students earning credit based on mastery, not time. The applicant discussed programs currently in place such as credit recovery and accelerated coursework. Simply put, the application did not convey the impression that the district was ready to embark on exploring giving academic credit based on mastery, not time in any all-inclusive, systematic way.
- The application discussed intervention and support programs in place to provide students with multiple opportunities to be successful at the macro level. There was no mention in the application of how this would look at the micro-level in typical classrooms for average to above-average students.
- The application discussed providing learning resources adaptable to all students. In the application it discussed this being possible while living largely within the current system. There was no mention of web-based learning and content that could be easily adapted at the push of a button to create a personalized learning environment.

Overall this section will score near the low end of the high range. Many of the components of this criterion were addressed fully with only a few failing to be directly mentioned. Within the component, the absolute priority seemed to again fall from focus.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant largely discussed their vision for LEA and school infrastructure. While discussing each component of the criterion, the vision could have been more ambitious in creating reform to improve academic performance of children.

- The application discussed all stakeholders having access to learning tools and resources in terms of providing high quality staff and more direct educator/student interaction as the major focus.
- This section of narrative did the applicant discuss the use of technology for all students inside and outside of the school.
- The application discusses technical support in terms of increasing access to technology and increased training for teachers.
- In terms of technology systems and data the applicant discussed the ability of teachers, parents, and students to continually check PowerSchool for live grade updates. The applicant does not mention use of electronic tutors or outside tools that will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap.

Overall this criterion scores in the high-middle range. The narrative addressed nearly all subcomponents directly, but could have increased the depth of their answers and the ambition within their plan.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a high quality plan detailing a plan for continuous improvement that included timelines, goals, people responsible, and concrete actions that would take place if difficulty arose.

- All elements of a high quality plan are in place and work together to create a coherent vision of what continuous improvement would look like within the district. The plan allows for progress monitoring of goals and ability to make mid-course corrections.
- In the narrative portion of this criterion, timely and regular feedback is discussed in multiple formats. The first format of communication is actually gathering the information through data analysis, then reporting the information throughout the

organization, and then to the public. The application specifically discusses information being communicated openly at public board of education meetings, however the applicant was in need of a high quality plan (Goals, activities, people responsible, deliverables, timelines, overall coherence).

The narrative portion for this criterion does not, however, address how and if monitoring for the reform process would change after the term of the grant expires. In addition, there was no mention of how expenditures and investments would be monitored and communicated.

Overall, this criteria scored a little better than the middle level of middle. The applicant constructed a very good plan for continuous improvement, but neglected to mention how investments would be monitored and what the district would do to monitor progress post-grant.

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

The applicant's narrative for this criterion discussed the district's communication plan without significantly addressing the purpose of ongoing communication in light of potentially changing reform plans thus not directly satisfying the criterion.

- The applicant discussed a Board goal of increased communication and referenced items such as a bi-annual newsletter, data reports appearing on websites, and foreign language interpreter.
- The two times the narrative mentions RTT progress and communication it discusses reports at Board of Education meetings and open communication with Parent Teacher Associations.

Overall, this criterion scores in the low middle range. While not precisely addressing the criterion, the strategies discussed for community engagement could very easily be used as a method of communication to discuss the altering of the original reform proposal.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has created 16 ambitious, yet achievable performance measures to track progress of reform efforts. The performance measures, however, fail to meet the requirements as provided and described in this criterion.

- A general rationale for all targets was provided in the narrative of this criterion.
- The performance measures that must be included and were provided in the table for districts were not included by the applicant.
- In the district-created performance measures the district provides many annual targets for many groups of students, inclusive of paying particular attention to social-emotional health and students who have typically under-performed.

Overall, this section will be scored in the high end of low. While many of the performance measures provided by the district could help guide reform efforts, the directions for the criterion were not followed. In addition, the rationale behind each performance measure was answered with a basic, global explanation which preceded the 16 measures in the narrative.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan for assessing whether or not RTT district monies were spent appropriately revolves largely around the concept of collecting data and communicating results from one level of administration to the next. No specific timelines, benchmarks or pre-determined measures of success exist within this plan.

- The application discusses how the LEA will create a system of analyzing the effectiveness of professional development. The proposed system did not appear comprehensive or well thought-out.
- There was no mention of how to measure the impact of technology on student achievement.
- There was also no mention of creating a leaner system for operations, forging community partnerships, investigating compensation reform, or modifying school structures.

Overall, this segment falls at the low end of low. There was no evidence of a well-thought out plan that if implemented would help support successful school reform. Almost all components of this criterion were not addressed in totality and/or sufficient evidence was not provided in enough depth to warrant points being awarded.

### 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 application provides a comprehensive budget detailing how RTT grant monies would be spent in order to help the district realize their 'dreams.' The expenditures detailed in the budget are also consistent with what was described throughout the application as necessary to support their reform movement.</p> <p>The money requested is reasonable and sufficient to fund the projects and initiatives as described and the applicant did break down the budget into an overall portion and then again by individual section.</p> <p>There was, however, not a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. There was no rationale provided for why positions such as reading interventionists start as 14 FTEs, eventually move to 10 and then there is no mention to how those positions could be sustained when the grant expires.</p> <p>Overall, this criterion rates in the middle range of scores. The budget was thoroughly completed and reasonable for accomplishing what was stated as objectives. The budget portion of the rationale behind reform, however, never thoughtfully discussed how increasing FTEs and then gradually decreasing them throughout the life of the grant with many remaining when the term of the grant expires is a sustainable plan for reform that could result in lasting increases in student achievement.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application for JCSD has provided a plan for reform and the budget to support their proposal. The plan has not, however, at any point discussed how increasing the number of employees in a district with temporary cash flow is ultimately sustainable. The plan refers to increased revenue through a 1/4 percent sales tax, but the projections forward do not provided enough detail to ensure sustainability of improvement measures.</p> <p>The application did include a letter of state support, but did not provide evidence of outside sources of additional revenue.</p> <p>The application did provide an additional three years of budget approximations for expenditures. The LEA did not, however, provide any estimates for revenues. Thus, it remains unclear whether their plan is sustainable.</p> <p>Overall, this section of the application scored in the low category because it is void of critical information necessary to move forward in assessing whether this plan is truly sustainable. In the current format with the information provided, this may not be a sustainable school reform effort and thus cannot earn any points for this criterion.</p>		

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides in great detail an integrated partnership which provides additional student and family supports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HEROES program focuses on the mental health of students and has had a large data-based impact in JCSD over the past four years.</li> <li>• The HEROES program is aligned to the rest of the reform proposal. Throughout the application the district often referred to the importance of the social-emotional well-being of children and discussed their focus on serving students in need.</li> </ul>		

- The narrative raises the question of the sustainability of the HEROES program - such a concern is valid. Currently HEROES is operating from a grant and the proposal is for it to continue to be grant funded. If funded, when RTT monies expire it is unclear if so too will the HEROES program.

The application did not provide 10 population level desired results that align with applicants broader proposal nor did it provide information on how the partnership would track indicators and use data to make mid-course corrections and target specific resources.

There was also no mention of how the partnership would build staff capacity through training and providing tools for them to assess needs of students and engage parents in families in this endeavor.

Overall, this criterion rates at the high level of the low category. The partnership between the LEA and HEROES is clearly strong and benefits children. The narrative and application in its entirety fails to answer many of the questions required of a narrative that would score higher.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not do a complete job in linking most criteria back to the absolute priority and how creating a personal learning environment was the overall goal. The reforms discussed, however, could create a personal learning environment.

The narrative for many criteria throughout the application discussed how the district strategy for personalizing learning environments was through increasing the effectiveness of teachers. This theme and correlation was discussed several times in many different criteria.

Total	210	132
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