



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0627NC-1 for Madison County Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Project EDGES is a collaboration of three districts focused on improving student outcomes and reducing achievement gaps to foster personalization based in career and college ready standards. To achieve this outcome, the applicant outlines three strategic reforms, redefining adult work, reframing professional conversations, and restructuring teaching and learning supports. These strategies are based off research, which emphasize the importance of transformational leaders, use of data and carefully constructed supports. The applicant believes the focus on adult activities within the school will lead to improved student outcomes. These strategies and outcomes are all grounded in the four assurance areas outlined in the RTTT. However, the applicant does not go into detail about specific activities that will take place, which will lead to these student outcomes, nor does it provide examples of research showing the effectiveness of the outlined strategies. The EDGES partnership also plans to collect and track data from all its schools ensure continuous improvement through evaluation. Overall, this scores a high medium, as it contains a strong vision, but could use more details to support it.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant conducted a needs assessment involving numerous stakeholders, and gathered ample data of student demographics and district profiles. The applicant does not describe what criteria it used for selection of schools and why certain schools were selected. There is also no mention of how this approach will affect the implementation of the project and why they believe it will work. The implementation and executive councils described make no mention of specific activities and what they will ultimately do for the project and school-level sites. The applicant does clearly outline the number of students participating, and how many of them are low-income or high-needs. This section scores a medium as it provides all the school and student level details, but lacks clarity on the actual implementation.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's SCALE Up plan outlines how they intend to meet project goals and defines their theory of change. This theory is grounded in five areas that include sustainable models, data analysis, and restructuring strategies. The applicant hopes to use the SCALE plan to embed ongoing monitoring of progress and a continuous feedback loop, which includes numerous areas of improvement. The applicant also provides specific strategies for scaling up the project, including ways to build capacity and infrastructure to reduce costs and increase sustainability. However, this scores in the medium range, because even though the plan is very detailed it does not provide any evidence of where this kind of model has been effective, or if it has ever been.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has outlined one major goal, to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps through equitable, personalized learning environments grounded in career and college ready standards, and four core focus areas, Performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, improved graduation rates, and improved college enrollment. The applicant also lists in Table 2, the outcome and performance measures that will be used to measure progress towards their goal over the core areas. The applicant states each of the performance measures indicated are associated with outputs or deliverables but does not go into any detail about what these are or how they will relate to the overall goal of preparing students for college or a career. The section scores in the medium range, because while the goals, measurables and</p>		

activities are there, the applicant does not provide specific evidence of effectiveness of these activities.

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	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant fails to show a true track record of success. The section mentions students as being 75%-100% proficient on tests but does not make mention of which tests and that range is far too large to be an indicator of anything. Although the applicant also identifies only one school as being identified as “persistently low achieving” this does not indicate success either. However, Yancey County schools have shown some success as several were identified as being improvement schools or Title I Reward schools. Graduation rates have been fairly consistent Yancey County, but Buncombe and Madison have both shown increases. The applicant does not have a system for monitoring college-going rates, but enrollment percentages at state schools have been relatively flat.</p> <p>The applicant points to Community High, in its third year of a School Improvement Grant as an example of significant reforms, as it has been described as “making progress”, but there is little data to back the claim. However, the school has implemented numerous reforms, including PIS, restructuring the schedule, and embedding PD for staff.</p> <p>The districts involved have real-time learning platforms with embedded data systems, and all maintain websites for community access. There is no uniform grading system, but each district has the infrastructure to implement data dashboards for parents, students and community members to access.</p> <p>Overall, this section scores low, as the applicant has no clear record of success, nor do they have experience in large-scale reform efforts. Student data is being collected, but there is no evidence of it being used to improve instruction.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a high level of transparency, with one of its LEAs receiving an A rating on the North Carolina Transparency website. Buncombe county posts its’ data online and provides salaries, expenditures, services and other resources. Madison and Yancey do not publish information on the internet, but do make it available upon request and are planning on putting this information on their websites. However, this section scores medium, as two of the counties do not provide any evidence of their transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has shown clear evidence of its ability to implement personalized learning environments. North Carolina is a Race to the Top state and has adopted Common Core standards as well as measures of student learning for non-tested curriculum areas. Additionally, the state provides flexible scheduling options and the necessary technological infrastructure.</p> <p>The state provides PD for staff to implement initiatives under Race to the Top and is the applicant is already implementing RTTT initiatives through the state grant. Applicant schools also have flexible scheduling for students.</p> <p>This section scores highly as the initiatives being proposed by the applicant are building upon work that the state is already funding through their RTTT grant.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Principals, along with other administrators were invited to a series of meetings to discuss the grant proposal. Principals offered concerns and criticisms, which were used to improve the proposal. Once the principals had accepted the proposal, meetings were held to introduce the plan to faculty members. Again, these meetings were used to help revise and shape the proposal. Teachers were asked to sign off on the grant to show their support, and more than 70% approved.</p> <p>Surveys were also used to gauge conditions at the schools, and determine what teachers needed to improve instruction.</p>		

Concerns raised in the survey were used to guide the grant proposal. Students and faculty were both surveyed.

Parents and families were reached through informal sessions at PTO, Band, and other groups which were already in place. Administrators held question and answer sessions to share the vision of the grant.

The applicant used data from the Buncombe County School's "STEM High School Design Committee" which was created to gather information and recommendations on improving STEM for students. There is no mention of whether community members were specifically involved in this particular proposal.

This section scores on the low end of the high range, as teachers, administrators and students all seemed to be prominently involved in the process, but there was nothing specific in place to engage the community, such as an open forum for the community to communicate with the school, newsletters, websites, press releases, or anything else that would make the community familiar with what is occurring in the schools.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The three districts performed an analysis of initiatives that currently personalize learning at their schools. They have found all three adopted summative state assessments, and two have adopted RTI. Buncombe is piloting a math program and looking at ways to personalize science in the middle grades. They have found elementary schools are the most advanced in personalization, but secondary is lacking. In that vein, the applicant has noted several gaps, including the need for a common RTI framework, LEA-wide coaching, benchmarking and common assessments, closely monitored leadership training, technology, and a consistent approach to personalization. The applicant would like to focus on creating a consistent framework across all schools for personalization and ensure student and adult needs are assessed and improved upon. This sections scores highly, as the needs are clearly addressed, and the applicant takes the next step and identifies what can be done to address these gaps.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is introducing a plan that would focus on student-centered learning by reforming teacher and administrator practices. The expected result is students will be empowered to understand the relevancy of their learning, set and meet goals, engage in deeper learning, and master academic content.

All NC schools are committed to the Future Core Ready plan which would allow students to tailor their courses to fit interests and goals, and provide opportunities for college level work. The Core also provides students pathways to teach college and career skills. Districts will also be integrating an Outcome Based Approach to teaching and assessment.

The schools participating in this project will be implementing the state's Common Instructional Framework, which includes collaborative work, writing emphasis, literacy groups, questioning strategies, scaffolding and classroom talk. These strategies encourage higher-level discourse with a variety of texts. They also promote effective communication. The applicant does not fully address this aspect of the proposal as it does not explain how students will have access to a variety of approaches and environments for learning, aside from listing potential partners in the community.

The applicant points out numerous ways high quality content is delivered in schools, including the use of virtual learning opportunities, but does not fully explain how they will produce college and career ready students. Although North Carolina has adopted the Common Core Standards, there is little explanation of how these will be used in their schools and how they will prepare students for postsecondary education. Several courses available by virtual learning can be used for college credit, but there is no mention of how many students are expected to take advantage.

The applicant intends to reach high-need students through RTI. The RTI framework would allow schools to make data-driven decisions about necessary interventions.

This section scores in the low-medium range, as it does not address all the necessary requirements. While numerous instructional strategies are mentioned, they are not linked to preparing students for college/career. There is a lack of definition of how students will be exposed to diverse learning environments or specific personalization strategies. The applicant also does not address how students will be pushed to master 21st century skills such as teamwork, problem solving and critical

thinking. They do earn points however in the recognition of tracking and making data actionable for teachers, and putting in place the infrastructure to collect and analyze real-time student data.

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

20

6

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal is focused heavily in increasing teacher and leader knowledge and skills. The three districts plan to create Data Teams in order to emphasize collaboration and discussion of data. Each of the districts already have PLCs in place although they are not standardized. Moving forward, they will develop district and school level teams which will focus on student proficiency.

Professional development will involve providing instructional coaches to provide embedded assistance and modeling of personalization strategies. Technology will be used to collect data continuously from flexible assessment methods. The applicant will spend the first year of the proposal providing intensive professional development around personalization, assessment and use of technology to build the necessary groundwork for teachers to build on moving forward. This will help to meet the criteria of supporting effective implementation of personalized environments as well as helping teachers to adapt their instructional strategies.

Schools will also improve teacher evaluation by using annual observations and student data to frame a dialogue around needed areas of improvement. The applicant does not specifically detail a new model for an evaluation system, nor what data will be used to evaluate teachers. The applicant also does not clarify whether student progress will be monitored towards college and career ready goals.

The partnership will maintain technological positions at each LEA, to be used as the individual LEAs see fit. This will provide the groundwork for enhanced infrastructure and provide PD for teachers and administrators on how to use new technology. Technology will also be used to help students with disabilities. The applicant does not address how technology and resources will be used to progress towards college and career ready skills for students.

This section is scored in the low medium range. There is ample evidence and demonstration of need for technology, tools, and resources but no discussion of how it will lead to improved student outcomes.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The EDGES Consortium outlines numerous policies and rules to help facilitate personalized learning. The governance structure includes several councils and features representatives from all partner schools which can adopt and modify policies as best fit their school. While the schools will be pushed to address performance data and foster personalization, all final decisions will be made at the school level.

The applicant cannot commit to giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways due to state policies, they will work to create new approaches to student proficiency. Out of school opportunities will be explored, such as Buncombe County's "Twilight School". Students will be given numerous formative and summative assessments in order to provide numerous ways to demonstrate mastery.

This section scores in the low-high range as the applicant has a strong governance structure, at both district and school level as well as leadership teams within the schools and is committed to numerous innovative assessment strategies that would provide students the opportunity to show proficiency in numerous ways. However, the applicant recognizes these ways may be limited due to the constraints of the state.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to provide support to all schools in addressing infrastructure needs and placing a bigger emphasis on new technology and software. A new data system NCDPI will be put in place which will provide parents access to student data. Each school will be given access to the system and training on how to use it. LEAs will work to provide all parents and families access to the system by using upgrading community centers which parents can go to to access computers to

download the information. LEAs will also be hiring Technicians and Technology Facilitators to provide PD to teachers and work with parents and students as well.

This section scores highly as the applicant is fully committed to new technology and upgrading their infrastructure and has a sound plan in place to make it available to as many families as possible. They will work to provide content to families regardless of income by utilizing central locations (ie community centers) to give internet access and the ability to log into the system. Tutorials will be provided to introduce stakeholders to the systems and make sure it is open for all to use. Finally, the applicant plans to complete the Instructional Improvement system which would encompass all their data and keep it in one place.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant intends to partner with an outside evaluator as well as federal RTTD evaluators to measure progress in their program and focus on what needs to be improved. They have extensive experience with evaluation thanks to Madison's i3 grant, as well as a relationship with experienced evaluators on numerous grants. The applicant plans to hold regular stakeholder input meetings in order to guide the project.</p> <p>However, this section scores low as it does not address specific evaluative methods. The applicant does not provide any detail as to what specific indicators will be monitored, what will define success or how they will determine what areas need to be focused in on.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines numerous ways it will communicate with stakeholders, including web-based communication, publications, press releases, monthly progress updates and parental outreach. The elements outlined should be able to reach internal and external stakeholders in numerous ways, especially by providing information digitally and in print which will be helpful for any stakeholders who may not have access to online content. Communication can be difficult for schools as external stakeholders do not always get involved, but the applicant's plan should provide them as many opportunities as possible. This section receives a high score as it provides a strong plan for communication.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines 12 performance measures, including several that apply to specific subgroups. Rationale is provided for most, but not all and it lacks any explanation of how the measure will provide rigorous, timely feedback, or how it applies to the proposed theory of action. There is also no explanation of how measures will be reviewed and used to improve the program. This scores a low medium for not fully explaining why each indicator was selected, and how that measure will provide formative information regarding the proposed plan. The applicant also does not explain how data will be reviewed or how it would be used to modify the proposal moving forward.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to work with an external evaluator to conduct formative and summative evaluation of the project. The formative evaluation will monitor the extent to which activities are conducted, the quantity of conducted activities, and how effective they are. The summative evaluation will focus on the performance measures. Breaking down the evaluation into Compliance, Quantity, and Quality will help the applicant as they monitor not only are they meeting the requirements of the grant and implementing what they said they would, but also how many students and teachers are being affected and most importantly how this is relating to better practice in the classroom. This section scores highly as it provides a well-planned evaluation with numerous measures indicated to monitor progress.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has budgeted for personnel, supplies, and contracted vendors in order to meet the goals of their program. They specifically set aside funds for instructional coaches to foster personalization, technology facilitators and technicians to implement, operate and train teachers, students and families on new software and devices.</p> <p>A project director and LEA director position is being created, which will be funded by the grant.</p> <p>Funds will be used to stipend faculty and staff for trainings, extra responsibilities and travel for professional development.</p> <p>Vendors will be brought in to work with new programs such as PBIS and creating common assessments. This section scores highly as it provides an in-depth budget and rationale for new positions. The funds supporting the project are all identified, as well as whether they are one-time or ongoing. The applicant believes most of the cost is infrastructure with only a little further funding that will be required after the grant period, but does not provide evidence or an explanation of how they will be able to pick up the cost.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no section F2 in the grant application, but the applicant does address sustainability. Supplies bought by the grant will not need to be replenished, as they would be a one-time purchase. However, personnel and professional development would need additional funding and the applicant does not address these issues. With the inputs from the grant (personalized learning, data driven decisions) future costs would be less than before the grant, but they are still issues that need to be addressed.</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 applicant plans to use PBIS and RTI systems in its schools to better help students experiencing trauma. Schools have a long standing relationship with numerous health and welfare agencies as well as having certified school therapists in place. The applicant schools have also participated in the System of Care Collaboration for many years.</p> <p>The applicant identifies several desired behavioral outcomes, but does not indicate any educational outcomes. There is also no mention of how data will be used to track student behaviors, growth or results, as well as no mention of any plan to scale up services. This section scores in the low range, as it is missing key information pieces on using data and targeting resources.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines a plan which will focus on improving teacher and leader activities in their individual schools. They plan to embed instructional coaches in the classroom in order to foster personalization and focus on improvement areas to provide teachers with individualized instruction. The applicant is also committed to upgrading its technology to better track and use student data. Personalizing learning and increasing teacher effectiveness extends into the RTTT assurance areas and meets the criteria for this grant.</p>		

Total	210	112
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant schools would like to implement a drop out prevention program across all schools. This would expand current after school programs modeled on the 21st CCLC program which is already in place. The drop out program would also build in middle to high school transition programs based on the Gear Up model. The applicant describes Gear Up as fostering a college-going culture, but does not address how this translates to effective transitioning from middle to high school, preventing dropouts. The applicant does not make the connection between the activities mentioned and student drop outs, nor address the research as to why students drop out and how Gear Up would be able to keep them in school. This section is scored in the medium range, as it does not provide the necessary detail to be viewed as a high-quality plan.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0627NC-2 for Madison County Board of Education

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 provides some evidence of a coherent reform vision by citing ties to the previously awarded state grant focuses on the related priority areas of college and career ready standards and assessments, data-driven decisions, and turning around low performing schools. The applicant does not thoroughly define the vision as it relates to each of the areas of strategic focus. The applicant mentions components of the vision but does not tie them together in a comprehensive reform vision. For example, the applicant indicates plans to address the reduction of achievement gaps in content areas. There is little description about this component and how it represents a piece of the overall reform vision.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
---	----	---

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some detail regarding the selection process. For example, various data were collected over a five month period. The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data provides different perspectives by which to view needs of the local schools and students. Bi-monthly face to face meetings provide evidence of active participation in the identification of pressing needs by the planning committee. The applicant provides little details about each school's needs and a rationale for choosing each site to participate.

The application contains a list of participating schools. The applicant further defines the number of schools, students, and teachers from each district who will participate, which adds clarity in assessing the adequacy of the resources requested.

The applicant clearly delineates the number of participating students from each district. Additional evidence is presented as to the number of low-income and high-need students from each district who will participate in the grant activities. The numbers

are further broken down by school site to add clarity in identifying the specific makeup of participants in the overall grant activities.

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some description of the selected theory of change. Articulation of the key areas of the SCALE Up! Change theory provides clarity in understanding how the model is used to facilitate progress toward goals. The applicant does not clearly articulate a specific connection between the change theory selected and actual project goals and outcomes. The application is lacking a clear timeline with deliverables that correspond to each of the needs identified in the proposal. The applicant does not provide a list of persons responsible for each activity included in the plan, which leaves some ambiguity in terms of how the proposed activities will all be implemented with high-quality.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant defines specific performance measures broken down by student grade span. The clarity in the desired outcomes provides a mechanism for assessing progress throughout the project.

The applicant articulates specific targets for student performance on summative assessments, graduation rates, and college enrollment, which appear reasonable given the historical data provided.

The applicant does not clearly tie the vision of implementing personalized learning environments to the stated goals. The applicant provides a listing of strategies with no direct connection to the desired performance targets in each area.

The applicant does not thoroughly describe how the vision is likely to result in decreasing achievement gaps. Percentage targets are provided with little description, which leaves questions as to how the established targets were identified and will be utilized to determine whether or not the project strategies are effective in reducing achievement gaps. The applicant does not specify how all strategies are targeted to specific student populations with the overall goal of decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups of students.

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	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some evidence of success in advancing student learning and achievement. For example, specific data are provided for one elementary school and two middle schools in mathematics proficiency. Additional evidence of success in advancing student achievement is illustrated in the growth in Micaville Elementary from a school of improvement to a Title I Reward School. This change in school status represents clear evidence of student growth.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates potential for improving achievement in graduation rates. Specific data reveal increases in graduation for each of the three districts since 2009, showing evidence of the possibility for improving student outcomes.</p> <p>The applicant indicates a potential for increasing accessibility of student performance data through the state's newly adopted Instructional Improvement System.</p> <p>The applicant shows some evidence of positive effects in the single school identified as lowest-achieving. In a year, proficiency on End of Course (EOC) exams increased significantly. Changes in student performance on individual EOC exams are not clearly defined for this school, which could provide additional clarity in achieving positive affects in low-achieving schools.</p> <p>The application only contains one participating school that has been persistently low achieving. There is no specific discussion of reforms and results in this particular school.</p> <p>Clear evidence of the potential to impact college enrollment is not readily apparent. The rates provided show fluctuations over the last four years with no clear trend for positive growth.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	5

points)		
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant notes that the participating districts have received a high ranking in transparency according to the state system. The districts currently document specific details about fiscal data showing how employees are compensated as one dimension of transparency. Salary reports and expenditure reports are readily accessible through public information requests. This practice increases transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has demonstrated evidence of sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described. For example, as a current grantee for a project with similar aims, the applicant has experience and the ability to implement stated reforms. Additionally, the benefits of flexible staffing and scheduling within the schools provides further evidence of successful conditions needed to effectively implement the proposed project. The applicant cites evidence of sufficient autonomy to implement the project activities in the statewide technological infrastructure that will soon be available as part of a previous award.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: Some evidence of stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal is evident. For example, as a result of feedback from principals, certain project components were adjusted. Specific needs that emerged from the survey data revealed a need for focused and collaborative planning as well as sufficient feedback for instructional improvement. These needs are reflected in the proposed project activities. Some information is provided about parental involvement in the development process. Specific details about parent input and how it was used to drive project planning are minimal. Some community collaboration is apparent in the quarterly meetings held with the STEM High School Design Committee. The makeup of this committee is not clearly defined. Discussions with the Buncombe County Teacher Association President show evidence of information sharing with teacher representatives about the proposed project. The applicant notes that 70 percent of teachers support the proposal, and signatures support this claim. Letters of support are provided from diverse stakeholders. This collective support represents evidence of the potential for ongoing partnerships and collaboration throughout the project.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides some evidence of the logic behind some components of the reform proposal. For example, a lack of fidelity in implementing Response to Intervention and using data effectively are mentioned as challenges. The applicant addresses these issues in the context of the project goals. There is not sufficient evidence of a clear connection between each of the gaps identified and specific project components. For example, the applicant notes a lack of a coaching model and coaching support. There is no direct link made between this gap, a specific project activity, and projected improvements in achievement.		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not clearly articulate a plan of ensuring that students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing goals. Several strategies are listed for the project overall, but no connections are made between those strategies and this specific criterion.		

The applicant references the state plan for allowing students to select from nine pathways that include skills for college and career readiness, but there is little discussion about specific components in the project that help students identify and pursue learning and developmental goals linked to college and career-ready-standards. A comprehensive plan for ensuring student understanding about structuring their goals and measuring progress toward those goals is not clearly articulated.

The applicant lists a variety of strategies aligned to the project goals. There is little explanation of specific ways in which students are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

One of the strategies includes the engagement of both teachers and students in project-based and culturally relevant service learning activities. This provides potential opportunities for integration of diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives.

The strategies listed in the proposed project represent possible opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving. For example, technological devices can be used to support critical thinking and problem solving practices in the classroom. Additional descriptions about how project activities will support students in mastering goal-setting, perseverance, and critical thinking are lacking.

Evidence of high quality instructional approaches and environments are apparent. For example, the applicant includes the practices of collaborative group work, questioning, and literacy groups. These practices represent practices grounded in research.

The applicant references use of the Common Core Standards, but does not clearly articulate how their proposed content is aligned with these standards or with graduation requirements. Reference is also made to the state Virtual Public Schools Program, but there is little discussion about how this digital opportunity is one that results from the proposed project.

The applicant indicates a plan to subscribe to high-quality STEM digital learning platforms. Further, the expansion of the virtual text library illustrates the integration of potentially high-quality digital learning content.

Individualized student performance data will be accessible through a digital learning platform. This practice can streamline efficiency and increase accessibility of student data for teachers. Electronic data collection tools also contribute to the use of ongoing and regular feedback.

The applicant does not thoroughly describe how the data will be used to make decisions and recommendations about student progress toward meeting college and career ready requirements.

Training opportunities provided for parents and staff members will be centered on the purchased devices or platforms that will be utilized throughout the project. A variety of training options provides a way to meet the needs of various stakeholders as they learn about the emerging technology. A comprehensive description of training specifically for students in using the desired tools and resources is lacking.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	6
---	----	---

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The integration of Data Teams represents a promising practice for increasing capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The applicant does not provide a thorough explanation of the training that will be implemented to support the creation and use of Data Teams at multiple levels throughout the districts.

Elaboration on the training that each instructional coach will provide is not readily apparent. The applicant does not thoroughly describe how the instructional coaches will provide specific support for teachers in adapting content and instruction and increasing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks.

Student response systems and mini learning management platforms provide a mechanism for monitoring student progress on a regular basis.

The applicant does not provide specific examples of other formative assessment tools and strategies and describe how those assessment results will be used to inform acceleration of student progress and the improvement of instruction.

The applicant includes some vague information about the Leadership training that administrators will attend. Few specific details are provided about the actual feedback teachers will receive or specific interventions that will be offered. More detail about the process of using co-teaching or professional dialog for teachers in need of improvement is needed to determine how these strategies fit into the overall continuous improvement process.

The applicant suggests a plan for training staff in the use of technology devices that is contingent upon hiring or expanding the number of technological facilitators. The applicant does not specify a clear and systematic plan by which each staff member will have access to and receive appropriate training on each of the required tools.

The acquisition of Assistive Technological Devices represents one aspect of student need that will be addressed through the proposed project.

The applicant provides vague references to some high-quality resources that will be utilized. It is not readily apparent how materials will be systematically demonstrated to all sites so that they can be used to facilitate student progress toward stated goals.

Contracting with data experts to establish skills and data focused leadership provide a groundwork for meeting student needs and establishing an effective learning environment.

Increasing use of a social-emotional curriculum to provide regular student data represents an important component of the data gathering process that can reveal important information about student needs.

The applicant references modified schedules and duties but does not make a direct connection between these practices and how they will be used to meet individual student academic needs. The applicant plans to use funds for leaders to attend international or national conferences, but no information is provided about specific conferences or topics that will be instrumental in implementing key project activities or improving student achievement in response to specific student needs.

The applicant makes vague reference to a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. Little detail is provided about this initiative or the pro-active recruitment plan that the applicant suggests.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The creation of an Implementation Council with representatives from each school represents an organizational structure that can facilitate personalized learning across multiple sites.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe the process of establishing rules, policies, and practices that will be in place for all schools.</p> <p>School Based Implementation Teams provide support to schools as they implement the proposed project activities. The applicant indicates that budget decisions will be made at the school level for certain expenses, which provides some flexibility for school sites.</p> <p>The applicant provides some strategies for students to accrue credit in non-traditional ways. A need for common assessments is cited, but there are no details explaining how the assessment process will be developed and use in conjunction with standards to support students in demonstrating mastery in multiple ways. Few details are included about the oral demonstrations, written work, and discussions as they will be used to determine student mastery. A more comprehensive description of the assessment for mastery process could provide clarity in this area.</p> <p>The use of Response to Intervention is an example of a practice that makes learning more accessible to diverse student populations. Additionally, the expansion of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method for classroom instruction for English Language Learners represents an example of best practice to help a specific population of students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates a plan to extend the virtual learning offered by the state for the partner districts and provide access to most stakeholders. There is no comprehensive description of how the applicant plans to provide appropriate access to all families without Internet access. It is unclear how many families or what percentage of the school population this group represents. As a result, it is unclear if the applicant's plans to utilize community centers or download all student assignments represent a practical solution to the accessibility issues.

The process by which peer tutors community mentors will receive the necessary training to address a wide range of technical support needs for students, parents, and educators is not clearly explained.

The applicant includes examples of systems supported at the state level that will be utilized, indicating likelihood of compatibility and potential reporting capabilities.

The state's implementation of the Instructional Improvement System embedded within a technological cloud provides a solid foundation on which to extend district data systems

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant mentions the practice of considering stakeholder input on a regular basis. There are few details provided about the timely and regular feedback that will be an inherent part of the project. Sharing of information will take place in a variety of public forums. The applicant does not clearly specify how this information will be used to facilitate continuous improvement throughout the life of the project.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Web-based communication and printed publications represent a combined approach for communicating with internal and external stakeholders. The use of a bi-monthly update shows evidence of an attempt to inform stakeholders at regularly specified intervals, and regular communication is important in establishing effective relationships with stakeholders. It is not readily apparent how and what types of information about the project will be shared with parents at school parent meetings.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant lists performance measures and reasons each will be useful to examine, which shows a commitment to improvement in specific areas. There is little description about how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan of action.</p> <p>The performance measures are not all clearly reflective of ambitious yet achievable measures. For example, the applicant indicates that beginning in 2014-2015, the state will transition to a teacher and principal evaluation system which will generate effectiveness ratings. While the applicant describes the proposed state system, there is no discussion of a specific percentage of effectiveness ratings in each category of the rating system. There is no direct link made between this system and performance measures in the proposed project.</p> <p>There is no comprehensive description of how the applicant will review and improve the measure over time to ensure progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not thoroughly articulate evidence of a high quality approach to continuously improving its plan. Some elements of continuous improvement are alluded to, but the applicant does not develop the isolated statements into a comprehensive approach that ensures continuous improvement. Some measures are in place to measure effectiveness of certain project activities. For example, post-training surveys can reveal evidence of learning and professional growth. The applicant references a valid coaching evaluation rubric but provides little details about specific criteria or how it will be utilized. There is also little discussion about how improved use of technology will be gauged. With this being a focus in the project, it would be important to assess how it contributes to overall improvement.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant utilizes a budget narrative and tables to clearly show all of the Race to the Top-District grant funds that will be used to support the project. Additional funds that will be utilized are not clearly delineated and connected to specific project activities. For example, the applicant does not describe all of the activities that will be paid with LEA, state, and federal funds.

The budget narrative provides some clarity in the use of funds for certain activities. For example, the applicant describes specific duties of the Technology Facilitators and a rationale for the associated costs. A thorough description of the total and itemized costs of each component show evidence of financial planning.

A thoughtful rationale for all investments and priorities is not readily apparent. For example, the process by which the stipend payments were determined is not clearly articulated. For example, the applicant indicates that instructional coaches will assist classroom teachers in implementing a personalized learning environment. The applicant does not clarify what specifically this assistance will entail and how the costs connect with the roles and responsibilities of the coaches.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A comprehensive, high-quality plan for sustainability after the term of the grant is not readily apparent. The applicant includes some possible funding sources, but few details are provided. For example, the applicant indicates that a future grant can provide other financial support; however, it is unclear what this future grant is and how reliable it may be as a potential funding source. Additionally, the applicant indicates that some positions will be absorbed by the LEAs, but the applicant does not specify which positions this refers to and the costs associated with each position. Overall, the application contains some vague assumptions about future funding options, but a comprehensive, high-quality plan for sustainability is not evident.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a partnership to provide health and wellness services for students. The applicant effectively describes the partnership and summarizes key components of the program that will be implemented to address student needs.

The applicant has defined specific performance measures. For examples, bullying reports will decrease by 30 percent as a result of the program. A variety of measures related to safety and wellness show the multi-faceted possibilities the program has for yielding positive results for students.

The applicant specifies some measures for tracking indicators of success. For example, an online reporting program will be used capture bullying incidents and track progress toward desired outcomes. It is not readily apparent how the standardized rating scale will be used to measure students' social skills competence.

The applicant describes a tiered approach that provides a responsive method for integrating education and social emotional services for students. This targets one major aspect of the individual needs previously identified.

A comprehensive description of how the applicant will scale the model beyond the participating students over time is not readily apparent. There is no discussion of actual funding sources or long-range plans to ensure that the project activities become an integral part of the district to maximize impact and resolve challenges over time.

The applicant identifies all ambitious yet achievable performance measures in measurable terms. One of the measures stated appears unclear as it is stated under the parent population group, but the desired result is listed as one for students. The applicant does not describe this connection or explain why this outcome fits with the parent category.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to implement a series of strategies to support teaching and learning in learning environments. The increase of technological tools and staff demonstrates evidence of one component that will be implemented to enhance student learning. Instructional coaching is another proposed strategy, and provides a potential for impacting teaching and learning over time as it can be used to improve instructional practice, self-reflection, and encourage individual growth. While the applicant lists a variety of strategies, a coherent and comprehensive plan for tying all of the strategies together in order to create personalized learning environments, improve teaching and learning, and increase the effectiveness of educators is lacking. The applicant does not thoroughly describe a plan for increasing teacher effectiveness, and it is not clear what the performance outcome is in this area. The applicant does not specify how achievement gaps will be decreased among diverse student subgroups. A high-quality plan for sustainability is lacking, so it is unclear how the project will be sustained long-term which is important in establishing marked improvement in some areas of student achievement that take time to realize.

Total	210	119
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	6

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides little information about the rationale for the specific population that will be addressed. The applicant includes a line item of over \$8 million for instructional coaches, but does not thoroughly explain how they will work with teachers and staff with specific strategies to target curricular areas of need. The applicant indicates that these individuals will assist classroom teachers in implementing a personalized learning environment; however, it is not defined what strategies will be utilized, what training the coaches will participate in and provide to others, and how they will build the capacity of all staff members.

The application is lacking several components of a high quality plan. For example, the application is lacking a thorough timeline with deliverables for each of the project activities. The applicant provides a vague timeline for the implementation of the after school and transition programs. Within this timeline, several of the components are stated in general terms, and there are no corresponding milestones to accompany the larger tasks. For example, the applicant indicates in Summer 2013-2014, an activity of planning and developing after school programs. This represents a large undertaking, and it is not clear what process will be used to complete this task and what roles and responsibilities are needed to ensure it is completed effectively.

Within the budget description, details are lacking making it difficult to determine the adequacy of the proposed budget to support the development and implementation of activities. For example, the applicant notes that \$45,000 would be provided for training stipends to cover training associated with initiatives in the project. The applicant does not clearly articulate which trainings will be provided and how the stipend amounts were figured for each specific training.

The applicant indicates plans to implement a dropout prevention program and obtain additional funding to address major tasks associated with the program. The applicant includes a broad description of the program, but specific details about how differentiation will occur at each level to meet the special needs of the varying student populations is not readily apparent.

The applicant does not specify how the additional funding for the dropout prevention program would result in fewer dropouts. Transitions from middle to high school are referenced, but they are not clearly connected to outcomes associated with lower dropout rates.

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0627NC-3 for Madison County Board of Education



A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision which involves focusing on the goal of improving student achievement and reducing achievement gaps in equitable, personalized learning environments grounded in career and college ready standards. To reach that goal, the applicant commits to three strategic R's of educational reforms which involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefining the work of adults • Reframing professional conversations • Restructuring teaching and learning supports <p>The applicant articulated a vision involves a strategic focus on redefined adult activity, reframed dialog, and restructured instructional and learning supports that lead to the following four core areas of student improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student performance on summative assessments, including measures of proficiency and growth • Reduced achievement gaps in core content areas • Improved graduation rates by school and district • Improved college enrollment rates <p>The applicant does not articulate how it will redefine the work of adults. Nor does the applicant identify the adults. The applicant does not mention how it will reframe professional conversations. In addition, the applicant does not communicate how it will restructure teaching and learning supports. Nor does the applicant define "learning supports".</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a concise approach to implementing its reform proposal. The proposal includes a description of the process that was used, a list of schools that will participate in the grant activities and the total number of participating students. For example, the project planning team, consisted of school district leaders, local WRESA representatives, participating schools, and community stakeholders, conducted a needs assessment utilizing quantitative and qualitative data which included district demographic data; school and district state testing results; teacher working conditions surveys; post-secondary enrollment rates, graduation rates, current Race to the Top and state reform plans, and anecdotal data from staff and community stakeholders. The needs assessment process occurred over the period of 5 months (June-October 2012) with bi-monthly, face to face, two-hour meetings among the participants and the planning committee. This process of data analysis and conversation lead to the selection of project schools and a finalized E.D.G.E.S. framework. However, the applicant did not provide a rationale for its selection process. The applicant conducted a needs assessment but did not provide a clear rationale for the needs assessment.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly articulates how its plan will be scaled up and transformed into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond its participating schools. After a successful 2013-2016 implementation of the E.D.G.E.S. reform project, the applicant will expand its framework to non-participating Buncombe County schools and surrounding North Carolina school districts through the S.C.A.L.E. UP process. The E.D.G.E.S. partners commit to an adoption of effective, personalized</p>		

teaching and learning solutions that improve the learning of participant teachers and students, along with future teachers and students as the model shows proof of effectiveness and expands to non- E.D.G.E.S. schools.

However, the applicant does not document how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all participating student, who would be served or participating teachers.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
---	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides convincing documentation that its vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by its ambitious yet achievable goals. As documented, the central goal of E.D.G.E.S. is to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps through personalized learning environments grounded in career and college ready standards. Each participating LEA, with its supporting partners, commits to a four-year emphasis on ambitious, yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for each participating LEA overall, and by student subgroup, across four core areas: (a) Performance on summative assessments; (b) Decreasing Achievement Gaps; (c) Improved Graduation Rates; (d) Improved College Enrollment. The partners will collect and track data across the four educational assurance areas to monitor success. In addition to the required LEA-wide measures or goals, the partnership identified 14 performance measures, or desired outcomes, for participating students from the E.D.G.E.S. partnership. The partnership also established a four-year implementation and evaluation timeline that provides a methodical, reasonable, and manageable start to school, student, and staff transformation inclusive of persons responsible for each critical task. Relative to data collection, the applicant did not provide strategies specific to each critical task.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sparse data relative to a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement. For example: The following data points show evidence of Yancey County's exceptional state recognition for strong student achievement:

- In 2007-2008, Micaville Elementary was designated as a school of improvement after two consecutive years of not reaching AYP. For the 2011-2012 school year, Micaville Elementary has been recognized as a Title I Reward school, a designation in the state recognizing the top Title I schools
- In 2007-2008, Bald Creek Elementary was also designated as a school of improvement after two consecutive years of not reaching AYP. For 2010-2011, they were noted as a school of progress and featured a proficiency in math of nearly 92%,
- In 2011-2012, East Yancey and Cane River Middle Schools were recognized by NCDPI as Title I Reward schools with math proficiency scores both >95%. In 2010-2011, every student at East Yancey Middle School scored a 3 or higher on the math proficiency test.
- At South Toe Elementary, an NC School of Excellence, nearly 90% of 3rd through 5th graders were reading on grade level. For the above reference four schools, no numerical data was given for 2008 to determine if any gains were made over a four year period.

Although the applicant evidenced quantifiable improvements in each district's four-year cohort graduation rate and the data suggest the most significant changes in Buncombe and Madison County Schools. Buncombe evidenced a 6% increase from 2010 to 2012, while Madison solidified its progress with a 20 percentage point increase from 2010 to 2012 (from 62.6% to 82.4%), the dropout rates decreased from 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. This is a clear indication that there was not a steady improvement in the dropout rate from year to year.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly demonstrates that a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration exists. As evidenced by the following: Buncombe County Schools is one of only two school systems in the state of North Carolina to have an "A" rating on transparency on the North Carolina Transparency website. The partners maintain a fiscally conservative record of ethical and legal expenditures across all district schools. All three LEAs prepare annual fiscal reports, reports that have undergone extensive state auditing procedures. Madison and Yancey County produce salary reports as part of any public information request. A common state practice for all three LEAs is to provide charts and statements regarding overall categories of expenditures within each functional area (the state assigns budget codes to each respective function). All three LEA annual fiscal reports are public documents available upon request. Although Madison and Yancey County currently do not post fiscal reports online, but in accordance with grant requirements, are committed to doing so and have the technological infrastructure to post.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal are clearly evidenced. Buncombe, Madison, and Yancey County Schools, in partnership with the local WRESA and additional partners, have the authority to operate within and advocate for changes to the state's current legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to successfully implement the personalized learning environments described in the E.D.G.E.S. proposal. Support and capacity is evidenced through multiple contexts, including: (1) Current status as a Race to the Top grantee; (2) State adoption of the Common Core and Essential Standards; (3) State adoption of Measures of Student Learning for non-tested curriculum areas; (4) Flexible scheduling allowed for innovative high schools; and (5) The technological infrastructure and resources for Cloud computing and resource access.

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal was described. Principals expressed both concerns and constructive criticisms related to the initial project framework. Upon receipt of principal assurance that their school community was ready to embrace the E.D.G.E.S. vision of transformed teaching and learning, school-based meetings were held for faculty. The after-school meetings involved central office administrators and principals providing a grant overview and engaging staff in a question/answer period. Teacher support for the grant vision is indicated by attached signatures obtained from each participating school faculty, with more than 70% committing their support. Although the applicant states that parents and family members of currently enrolled LEA students engaged in the planning process through informal parent sharing sessions connected with previously planned school events. No documentation is provided regarding parent buy-in or that parent were a part of the planning process. Parents were only informed about the grant vision. Student surveys were conducted; however, it was unclear as to what information the surveys provided. Feedback on the student surveys would reveal the level of support and buy-in from the students as stakeholders. Collaboration with the community, and non-profit supporters as well as the local teachers association took place.

(b) Meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support was clearly evident. The proposal received support from superintendents of the participating districts, local school boards, and teacher associations, state and US legislators, county finance managers, non-profit organizations (21 Century Learning Community and YMCA), the Western Region Education Alliance and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly describes a high-quality plan for an analysis of the its current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. All three districts have adopted the state summative assessments, including formal End of Grade or End of Course tests in major content areas, and will pilot the new “Measures of Student Learning” assessments in Spring 2013. These assessments yield annual data used by district data managers, particularly with Buncombe County’s four-person data team, to assess course offerings, place students, and to identify LEA areas of weakness.

One district realized that the elementary level schools (grades Kindergarten-fifth grade) are the most advanced with personalized learning, as they often utilize common assessments for identifying student learning gaps across major content areas. In addition, common formative and interim assessments are sorely lacking in its secondary classrooms.

A thorough needs assessment process yielded the following teaching and learning needs and/or gaps in services and supportive:

- (1) Introductory or non-existent adoption of the RTI framework [nationally known as “Response to Intervention; identified in North Carolina a “Responsiveness to Instruction”]. One district’s lack of an RTI implementation and tow of the other districts’ introductory fidelity to the model require expansion for more effective data-driven individualized interventions.
 - (2) Non-existent LEA-wide instructional coaching model
 - (3) Lack of consistent instructional coaching support in identified secondary schools
 - (4) Non-existent secondary (middle and high school) benchmark or common assessments in the four major content areas (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)
 - (5) Lack of consistent and closely monitored instructional leadership training focused on data driven models for local school administrators
 - (6) Lack of consistent, personalized learning approach across grades 3-12 and
 - (7) Need for expanded technological resources, including learning platforms and devices provided varied learning activities and real-time data feedback
- The plan is achievable as it focuses entirely on individual reforms with the intent to grow expert teachers and instructional leaders; strengthen student resiliency and knowledge; expand student exposure to post-secondary opportunities; and build local families into student advocates, one parent at a time.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly conveys a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan includes clearly defined strategies and activities for preparing students for college and careers that include:

- Redefining work of adults, reframing professional conversations, and restructure teaching and learning supports
- Engaging teachers and students in project-based and culturally relevant service learning activities
- Developing skills in writing competency or proficiency-based learning outcomes/targets
- Engaging teachers in deeper content experiences
- Establishing or expanding a network of technology technicians and facilitators
- Expanding day, after-school or virtually-based credit recovery or credit expansion opportunities (non-traditional hours)

Partnerships with local and state for- and non-profits, governmental agencies, post-secondary institutions, parents, and other stakeholders will provide the hub of content expertise, experiences, and supports necessary to ensure a new measure of freedom within the learning process. The end result of engaged and empowered students working in tandem with community partners will be their emergence from the Pre-K-12 environment identified as college- and career-ready. Such partnerships are reasonable for supporting the vision of the project in an effort to impact overall student learning.

It is clearly evident that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. However, the applicant does not define “supports: relative to what is necessary to ensure a new measure of freedom within the learning process. The applicant references the core practices of the Common Instructional Framework but does not provide strategies for introducing or implementing the framework as an instructional tool.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly demonstrates a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan provides an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. The approach to the plan is supported in the following manner. The partnering school districts will introduce the Common Instructional framework to participating staff in the spring of 2013, with summer 2013 training to follow. The Framework is built on the core practices of: (1) Collaborative group work; (2) Writing to Learn; (3) Literacy Groups; (4) Questioning; (5) Scaffolding; and (6) Classroom Talk. The practices encourage students to select, read, and engage in higher level discourse with a variety of non-fiction and fiction texts.

The partners plan to engage students with high-quality content, including digital learning content that will:

- provide math and science classrooms with subscriptions or access to high-quality STEM digital learning platforms that present and represent content in new and unusual way
- immerse science students in a mobile, visual immersive environment allowing for an interactive exploration of Earth and Space Science
- Expand virtual course offerings through conversation with potential vendors who can show evidence of courses linked to North Carolina college- and career-ready standards;
- expand our local collection of non-fiction virtual leveled texts to meet the literacy needs of 4th-8th grade students; and
- provide students opportunities for expanded day or out-of-school time course credit recovery or course expansion through digital platforms
- Leaders will support school-based social-emotional programming at the secondary levels and a school-wide emphasis on culturally responsive instructional and leadership practices.
- In cases where hard-to-staff schools or subject areas lack highly effective teachers, districts will establish a pro-active recruitment plan, while simultaneously coordinating internal staff transfers to ensure that the target schools have a highly trained staff in place.

The applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education). The applicant also proposes to utilize North Carolina’s nationally-recognized *Responsiveness To Instruction (RTI)* framework to make data-driven decisions about necessary student interventions in an effort to close gaps through personalized student accommodations and research-based strategies.

There is no mention of how progress will be monitored. Relative to training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps, the applicant does not elaborate or explain the training process or who would be involved in, and be responsible for the training.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

Available

Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides sound evidence of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed as it relates to its practices, policies and rules. The E.D.G.E.S. Consortium is governed by an Executive Council composed of the three superintendents of participating LEAs that make up the Consortium. The Executive Council will employ a Project Director, administered by the Lead LEA, Madison County Schools. The Executive Council through the Project Director will form an Implementation Council to be comprised of a Grant Facilitator from each LEA and a representative from each participating school. The Implementation Council will have advisors from the Support Partners from each LEA. Each participating school will have a School Based Implementation Team that will also have access to the Support Partners and the support and services available through the Executive Council and Implementation Council. Policies, rules and practices will be reviewed and adopted to provide even more flexibility and support for all the participating schools.</p> <p>The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning that are comprehensive as evidenced by the following:</p> <p>The expanded number of LEA Instructional coaches, together with the School Based Implementation Teams, will work closely to provide teachers with professional development focused on personalized learning instructional strategies.</p> <p>Although the E.D.G.E.S. partners commit to giving all students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, each LEA remains constrained by state policies and procedures that still require student acquisition of Carnegie units based on seat time and evidenced academic proficiency.</p> <p>The current lack of secondary (grades 6-12) formative assessments necessitates grant funding for the creation of common assessments. Based on pre-test results, when appropriate, trained, Distance Learning Teachers can provide assignments to these students through an online learning management system during the school day.</p> <p>Students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times (formative, interim, and summative assessments) and in multiple comparable ways including oral demonstrations, written work, technology-assisted evaluation and assessments, and student discussions. Professional development in the newly adopted common instructional framework will assist educator knowledge of ongoing formative and interim assessment techniques that easily connect to daily learning tasks in a seamless manner. The adoption of a Learning Management Platform, along with other real-time data collection platforms, will significantly expand instructional opportunities for students to show classroom-based competency, as no one will be limited to traditional paper/pencil tests.</p> <p>Learning resources and instructional practices will be provided that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.</p> <p>The partners will support the RTI framework with varied technological supports, particularly with "Assistive Technological Devices" for students with physical disabilities and student readers that scaffold language for limited English proficient youth.</p> <p>The applicant does not specify how and when teachers and instructional coaches will work together and what the focus will be. In addition, the word "appropriate" is ambiguous, as it relates to when pre-tests will be administered to determine when distance learning teachers will be able to provide assignments to students via the on-line learning management system.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sound evidence of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed as it relates to it's the LEA's and infrastructure.

The current Race to the Top grant, which North Carolina received in 2010, has allowed the three LEAs in the E.D.G.E.S. Consortium to address infrastructure needs, allowing a bigger emphasis to be placed on software, curricular delivery systems, and devices. This system of programs for student management, provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), will be in place by July 2013 and will include a data collection center, a professional development repository, parent access to student progress reports, grading system, attendance system, and curriculum repository. The E.D.G.E.S. Consortium will build on this system by providing to each participating school the necessary tutorial software and

training and the devices/tools necessary to effectively provide personalized learning and access and to monitor the progress of the personalized learning to enable teachers to become even more effective in personalizing the instruction. In addition to an Instructional Coach, each participating school will have a Technology Facilitator and a Technician to provide professional development instruction, to address hardware and software issues, and to ease the daily implementation issues of such a major change in the technology platforms for personalized learning.

All students, parents, educators, and other appropriate stakeholders, regardless of their income, will have access to the content and technology that creates the personalized learning approach. Via the applicant's blended learning approach to personalized learning, a variety of learning platforms will be made available to each teacher. All the participating schools have adequate high-speed broadband access but many families in the more rural mountainous areas do not have such access. Therefore, each LEA's Implementation Team will develop alternatives for those without such access, including addressing the use of community centers for such access, downloading any assignments or instruction so access at home is not necessary for access to content, extended school hours for family access to technological equipment, and more.

Although the applicant documents that all students and parents will have access to content technology, the applicant does not specifically state how they will have access.

The applicant will ensure that students, parents, educators, and other appropriate stakeholders will have appropriate levels of technical support by providing a range of strategies which include peer tutors, community mentors, local support from the Technology Facilitator and Technician as well as the classroom teacher, online support, and Intervention/Enrichment periods through the work of school-based data teams or other professional learning communities.

The applicant documents that it will continue to expand on the three LEA's existing information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. It also documents that forthcoming systems supported at the state level include: (1) North Carolina's Instructional Improvement System; (2) Power School; (3) Discovery Techbook; and (4) It's Learning Platform. The E.D.G.E.S. Consortium will provide technical training, on-going support for devices, and necessary access to high-speed broadband to ensure effective implementation and use.

Although the applicant documents that it will continue to expand on the three LEA's existing information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems it does not include a clear plan as to how the system will be available to students and parents.

The applicant clearly documents a plan to ensure that all participating schools and their respective LEAs use an interoperable system to include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Relative to a continuous improvement process, the applicant presents a clear and high quality continuous improvement plan that includes: (1) Continuous data analysis provided by an evaluation process; (2) Quarterly and annual stakeholder input, including effective community partnerships; and (3) Annual project revisions based on prior year data. The partners within the applicant commit to quarterly and annual stakeholder input through various communication strategies that include: (a) Quarterly Advisory Committee meetings; (b) Parent, student, teacher, and administrator surveys; (c) Partnerships and signed MOUs with community organizations.</p> <p>Relative to annual project revisions, the grant-funded project director and local LEA project managers will regularly consider stakeholder input, including professional evaluation data to identify components of the E.D.G.E.S. project that require revisions, eliminations, or additions. Final decisions will remain data-driven and in the best interest of those served.</p> <p>There is no mention of what the surveys will be used for or who would be responsible for the monitoring process. In addition, the applicant does not clearly define "regularly" as it relates to how often stakeholders will provide input to the project.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Relative to ongoing communication and engagement, the applicant well documents a clear and high quality plan. The applicant proposes to have effective communication and engagement strategies for internal and external stakeholders. Strategies include: Web-based communication, printed publications, digitally-based communication, press releases and media alerts, progress updates, and parent outreach via school meetings and activities.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan.

The plan demonstrates clear, ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The plan communicates performance measures in the following areas.

- Highly Effective Teacher/Principal
- Effective Teacher/Principal
- Math End of Grade/Course Proficiency
- Reading End of Grade/Course Proficiency
- Grade 3 Reading Fluency (mCLASS) Indicator
- Grades 3-8 & Grades 9-12 Health and Social-Emotional Indicator
- Grades 5-8 Science Proficiency
- Grade 8 College & Career Readiness [EXPLORE]
- Grades 9-12 College Readiness: FAFSA Applications:
- Grade 11 College and Career Readiness [ACT]

However, the applicant does not provide achievable performance measures for all sub-groups.

- Grade 12 Career Readiness [WorkKeys]
- Grade 10 Biology

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results, through such strategies as improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures (e.g..., service delivery, school leadership teams (as defined in this notice), and decision-making structures) are clearly evidenced by the following:

An external evaluator will be contracted to work with the E.D.G.E.S. partnership to conduct both a formative/process and summative evaluation of the project. The formative evaluation will focus on compliance, quantity, and quality and utility'

In the area of compliance, for example, the applicant will do an assessment to determine if Instructional Coaches are in place at each school, are all of the trainings within each strategy conducted, are technology technicians and facilitators hired, are technological and/or curricular resources purchased and provided to each school, etc.

In the area of quantity, the applicant will focus on outputs. This component will answer many school staff, community members, parents, and students participate in each grant activity (e.g..., trainings, coaching, volunteering, data teams, learning activities, virtual courses, mental health services)? How many and what types of resources are purchased through the grant?

In the area of quality and utility, the applicant will address the quality of activities such as trainings, coaching, learning and mentoring activities. The applicant will do an assessment to determine the use of instructional practices gained through grant

activities, the use of technology purchased by grant, as well as fidelity of RTI and Common Instructional Framework implementation. The quality of activities will be assessed through post-training surveys developed by professional evaluators or the vendor conducting the training, results from a valid coaching evaluation rubric, an annual online teacher survey developed by the evaluation team (i.e., will contain items about quality of coaching), and online surveys (middle and high school students) and focus groups (high school students) with students participating in learning and mentoring activities.

The summative component of the evaluation clearly demonstrates that the applicant will focus on the effectiveness of the grant investments by addressing the outcomes measures listed in the table below. The table also provides the data sources for each measure. The evaluation team will be responsible for analyzing all outcome data and providing annual reports summarizing the results. If possible, the team will examine the relationship between outcomes and level of implementation in the following areas: teacher/principal effectiveness measures, college and career readiness measures, academic measures, and health and socio-emotional 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>The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables clearly identifies all funds that will support the project and are feasible. The budget and sub-part budgets are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal inclusive of project services and activities as evidenced by the following: The applicants proposes to serve 22 school districts, approximately 10,000 students, and approximately 880 teachers across three school districts (Buncombe, Madison and Yancey Counties). Other costs associated with the project will include personnel and fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractuels and indirect costs over a four year implementation period.</p> <p>The proposal clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities by utilizing personnel, supplies, and contracted services to meet it's program goals. School based instructional coaches will serve as vital members of the personalization learning data teams and guide conversations about relevant academic data; including school, teacher, and student data. Through the research-based strategy of local school-based instructional coaches engaged in providing model classrooms and co-teaching activities, faculties across the participating schools will expand instructional practice for personalized learning. The plan centralizes on the strategies of redefining the work of adults, reframing professional conversations and restructuring teaching and learning supports.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has an unclear plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan only implies support from State and local government leaders and financial support. For example the applicant communicates that further investment past the grant period will be required, much of the project is self-sustaining. Although some positions afforded by the grant will no longer be necessary (project director, LEA directors) some will be absorbed by the LEAs through attrition, State and local government leaders and other financial support (future grant). Supplies purchased by the grant will not need to be replenished beyond what can be afforded by state and local budget requests. Paramount in the sustainability plan is the knowledge that will be absorbed in the aftermath of the project. Through the federal investment, instructors in place at each school will further be able to make data-driven decisions. After hour school educator workforce has successfully realized the benefits of an implemented personalized learning environment, faculties across the participating schools will expand instructional practice for personalized learning. After hour school educator workforce has successfully realized the benefits of an implemented personalized learning environment, faculties across the participating schools will expand instructional practice for personalized learning. Relative to sustainability, the applicant did not document that it secured support from State and local government leaders and financial support from for profit and non-profit community based organizations or other possible grant-funding sources.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is recommending a distinct social-emotional project to improve student performance. This initiative is focused on trauma-related interventions, inclusive of a standard grant budget as well as an optional budget that allots funding for necessary staff to carry out the project. The applicant cites that there is growing research linking exposure to trauma and personal loss to learning and behavior problems, including difficulty in language, communication, problem-solving skills, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, executive functioning and regulating emotions, as well as forming peer and teacher relationships. Trauma reactions can also be easily confused with impulsivity, hyperactivity, and aggressiveness. A child experiencing trauma may often have a difficult time concentrating, following lessons, and sitting still. In the classroom, these are the students who have trouble behaving and learning due to social-emotional skills.

The proposal involves creating trauma-sensitive school and classroom environments in which all students are explicitly taught behavior expectations and social/emotional skills, and where those skills are acknowledged and encourage. Schools will utilize an evidence-based character education and social skills building curriculum that has been proven to improve academic performance, student behavior, and overall school climate.

The proposal also involves creating trauma-sensitive supportive services to increase students' social emotional skill proficiency and academic performance while decreasing office disciplinary referrals and suspensions.

By implementing trauma-related interventions, the applicant proposes to increase access to school-based therapy by using school counselors and social workers to co-facilitate group counseling with our school-based community therapists which will extend the service to non-Medicaid/Health Choice students.

The applicant clearly documents its partnership approach to the intervention by proposing to increase access to 21st Century after-school programming for at-risk middle school students and provide training to the YMCA staff that operates this program in trauma related practices. Parent trainings provided by this program will be opportunities for parent skill development and coordination of services. The applicant proposed to utilize components of the social skills curriculum identified in Tier 1 to provide more intensive instruction to students who need additional instruction and supports.

The target populations are grades 6-12. The plan is inclusive of clearly defined performance measures focused on population-level desired results for students.

One of the clearly demonstrated performance measure achieved cites that students' social skills competence increased by 50% on standardized rating scale.

One clearly articulated performance measure anticipated to be achieved involves the number of students accessing day treatment as a partial day program will increase by 25%.

Based on the above information, the applicant clearly demonstrates the ability to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment resources and provide additional student and family supports that addresses the social, emotional and behavioral needs of participating students. The performance measures are clearly defined and are ambitious yet achievable for the proposed population and are inclusive of clearly defined desired results for students.

The applicant, however, does not provide specific data regarding the impact of the interventions on student learning and achievement.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates a concise, comprehensive and coherent reform vision which involves focusing on the goal of improving student achievement and reducing achievement gaps in equitable, personalized learning environments grounded in career and college ready standards. To reach that goal we commit to three strategic R's of educational reforms which involve: redefining the work of adults, reframing professional conversations, and restructuring teaching and learning supports.

The applicant presented a clear and concise approach to implementing its reform proposal. The proposal includes a description of the process that was used, a list of schools that will participate in the grant activities and the total number of participating students.

The applicant clearly articulates how its plan will be SCALE UP and transformed into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond its participating schools. After a successful 2013-2016 implementation of the E.D.G.E.S. reform project, the applicant will expand its framework to non-participating Buncombe County schools and surrounding North Carolina school districts through the S.C.A.L.E. UP process.

The applicant provides convincing documentation that its vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by its ambitious yet achievable goals. As documented, the central goal of E.D.G.E.S. is to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps through personalized learning environments grounded in career and college ready standards.

The applicant provides sparse data relative to a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement. The applicant did however; provide Data points to show evidence of one of the participating district's exceptional state recognition for strong student achievement.

The applicant clearly demonstrates that a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration exists.

Successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal are clearly evidenced.

Meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal was clearly described.

The applicant clearly conveys a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan includes clearly defined strategies and activities for preparing students for college and careers that include:

- Redefining work of adults, reframing professional conversations, and restructure teaching and learning supports
- Engaging teachers and students in project-based and culturally relevant service learning activities
- Developing skills in writing competency or proficiency-based learning outcomes/targets
- Engaging teachers in deeper content experiences
- Establishing or expanding a network of technology technicians and facilitators
- Expanding day, after-school or virtually-based credit recovery or credit expansion opportunities (non-traditional hours)
- The plan demonstrates clear, ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The plan communicates performance measures in the following areas.
- Highly Effective Teacher/Principal
- Effective Teacher/Principal
- Math End of Grade/Course Proficiency
- Reading End of Grade/Course Proficiency
- Grade 3 Reading Fluency (mCLASS) Indicator
- Grades 3-8 & Grades 9-12 Health and Social-Emotional Indicator
- Grades 5-8 Science Proficiency
- Grade 8 College & Career Readiness [EXPLORE]
- Grades 9-12 College Readiness: FAFSA Applications:
- Grade 11 College and Career Readiness [ACT]
- Grade 12 Career Readiness [WorkKeys]
- Grade 10 Biology

The applicant provides a clear description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations, such as public health, before-school, after-school, and social service providers; integrated student service providers; businesses, philanthropies, civic groups, and other community-based organizations; early learning programs; and postsecondary institutions to support the plan.

--	--

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

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 applicant is proposing an Optional Budget request for specific initiatives focused on student social-emotional development and dropout prevention. The social-emotional component was described in the "Competitive Priority Points" section earlier in the narrative, but a more detailed funding chart follows immediately below this text. The Social-Emotional budget request = 1,998,792.52. The dropout prevention budget request = 1,995,241.40.

The applicants grant involves three school systems that are different in size and economic assets, however all three have a precise focus on increasing the graduation rate for their students. The systems have also included a curriculum that involves personal goal setting and long range planning such as college and career ready goals.

The proposal also involves creating trauma-sensitive supportive services to increase students' social emotional skill proficiency and academic performance while decreasing office disciplinary referrals and suspensions.

The applicant's optional budget, including the budget narrative and tables clearly identifies all funds that will support the project and are feasible. The budget and sub-part budgets are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal inclusive of personnel and fringe benefits, contractals, training stipends and indirect costs over a three year implementation period. Based on what the project proposes relative to drop-out prevention and trauma sensitive-support systems, the budget will not adversely affect the applicant's ability to implement its proposal and meet Absolute Priority 1. The drop-out prevention component and the trauma-sensitive support system is appropriated and adds value to the overall proposal.