



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0463TN-1 for McNairy County School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas.</p> <p>The District has adopted standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. This is evidenced by a District-wide adoption and progressive implementation of Common Core Standards, the use of personalized learning plans (PLP) that are college and career focused, the creation of a Master teacher/Data Coach monitoring and supporting the PLP, and the creation of an Empowering Parent Involvement Program to focus on college and career-readiness</p> <p>However, the District does not show that it has a strong plan to build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction. The District does not have an adequate explanation of the data system and how it will improve instruction. There is only a cursory explanation of the Kuder program of College and Career Planning. There is mention of the District's daily use and continuous improvement of data systems, but with little explanation. Though there will be a Master Teacher/Data Coach helping staff to use the data systems, again the explanation of the data system and how it will work to help improve instruction is lacking.</p> <p>The District does create a strong response to its recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. This is evidenced by the District's record of attracting, training, and retaining staff, the use of the Leader in Me professional development as well as the use of Generations at School, The Courage to Lead, The Leadership Challenge, and Social Styles at Work programs. Additionally, the district will create Professional Collaboration Teams (PCTs) for collaboration across school, as well as a personalized approach to Professional Development (PD) including the formation of a Leadership Academy for growth and incentive pay for performance. There will also be a PD coach for all staff.</p> <p>The District does not have a clear plan for turning around lowest-achieving schools. No discussion of turning around lowest-achieving schools other than an empty sentence of demonstrative ability.</p> <p>The District does articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement. This is shown by the District's Accelerate! Program. The District is fully invested in the idea of accelerating student achievement through creating the PLPs, hiring a Data Coach to help facilitate student achievement and creating a digital portfolio of learning for each student.</p> <p>The District also shows a commitment to deepening student learning, by creating extra time for students to learn during the year and creating summer programs such as an art camp and a STEM academy. The District is also moving toward more access to digital learning, but the explanation of how it will increase equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests is weak. There is little explanation of how the work is personalized toward academic interest. The PLP is mentioned, but no indication of student academic interest. Personalization of learning with highlighting of strengths and weaknesses, but no indication of student academic interest.</p> <p>This answer has both strong and weak responses embedded in its overall plan, thus this section is rated in the middle range. (6/10)</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Extent to which applicant's approach to implementation will support high-quality implementation

A) Description of process to select schools. There is little to no discussion about the process of selecting school. Proof of support, but little to no explanation of how schools were selected.

-- Signed letters of support

-- Schools have committed to the plan

B) List of schools that will participate

-- List is provided

C) Total number of participating students

-- Total number of participating students is provided

This was scored in the medium range (6/10) because the answer provided the list of schools and total number of participating students, thus answering fully subsections B and C, but failed to provide a complete or thorough answer to how or why high-quality implementation will occur. Letters of support and signatures of support are included, but no narrative about how or why the implementation will happen. No explanation of why or how High-quality implementation will manifest. Total Score 6/10

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District's description of a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support District-wide change beyond the participating schools and help the applicant reach its outcome goals is lacking in a series of fundamental ways. The district makes a compelling case that it can create schools where student performance and progress are high, as evidenced by 38.5% of the district's schools being designated "Reward Schools." However, the plan to scale up is unclear with only a reliance on "further empowering [sic] personnel at the school level." Though the district will use programs such as the Leader in Me and a whole-school Transformational Model, the District stipulates no actual plan to bring the other five non-Reward Schools to a higher level. The three-year implementation plan makes no reference to the differences between and among the non-Reward Schools versus the Reward Schools. There is no explanation why exactly what exists for the 3 Reward Schools will work for the 5 non-Reward Schools.

The District's response to this section is in the low, medium range with a score of 4/10 because though the district has a record of success with some schools the district does not explain how that record of success will translate to lower performing schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The District's vision will likely result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity if one believes that the Accelerate! plan will be funded and implemented. The targets suggested by the District are ambitious yet achievable. However, the weakness of the answer delivered by the District is that it only states that the plan as mentioned in the introduction of the application will lead to the increased performance and equity. There is no explanation of each subset of how the District will improve the specific areas of subsections a-d. There is no mention of the optional subsection e. Because the answer only refers back to the expansive and holistic program Accelerate!, the readers is asked to infer that all of the methods stipulated in the said program will lead to these specific outcomes. Will the investment in creation of a Personalized Learning Plan, the hiring of a Data Coach, and investments in professional development lead toward an increase of graduation rates? Because the application does not specify which parts of the district's plan will support each subsection, the reader is forced to look at everything as a whole. There is no argument made for how the Accelerate! plan will decrease achievement gaps. In fact, there is little mention of achievement gaps. There is not specific mention of college enrollment and no mention of a college enrollment plan on the idea of college and career readiness. There is a compelling argument that graduation rates will increase because students are being treated individually and supported to succeed through the machinations of the Accelerate! plan. However, there is no conversation of support on summative assessments other than again the extra support and individual support the students will receive in the district. Thus, I rate this in the low range (3/10) because though there are pieces of the Accelerate! program that could address pieces of the areas of performance asked for in this question, the District's answer did not explain how this will occur, or did it mention significant parts of the question such as college enrollment or achievement gaps.

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	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District has shown a mixed record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching as evidenced by having all of the eight schools deemed In good standing in 2009 then having eight schools in good standing in 2010, and only seven schools in good standing by 2011. However, in 2012 three schools (two of which were "Target" schools the year before) were deemed Reward Schools (putting them in the top 5% of the State in either progress or performance. Because of the State's changing rubric of success, the picture of a linear trajectory of growth is murky. Yet, before the inauguration of the "Reward School" program, the district was moving in the opposite direction of success as a whole.

Additionally, in the District's response there is little to no data to show an improved student learning outcomes and the closing of achievement gaps. Data produced in the Appendix is only for one or two years and in some cases showing a three year average. This is clearly not a four year record of success. In the narrative section, the District only speaks to 2011 and 2010 data for raising students scores. In fact much of this section is just a stating of meeting or exceeding state benchmarks, not a record of growth or movement in a positive direction. Though the District states that it has a proficiency rate of 42% in Math K-8, which is 1% above the state average, there is no comparison to years before. The same goes for its reading/language arts K-8 proficiency rate of 54%, which is at the state average.

The District's high school graduation rate in 2011 was around 93%, above the state average of 85.5% and well-above the 75% national graduation rate. The District should be commended for this high rate, however, the District does not show any evidence of four years of progress or even four years of consistent achievement. The District fails to answer the question by not providing the evidence of four years of data.

The District's response to its college enrollment over four years is to say that it has "witnessed an upward trend in college enrollment rates." Though the District does not provide any data to support this statement. It continues to state that seniors are completing college applications earlier and that under-represented groups are applying in high rates. Yet, again, the District does not provide proof of these statements. There is a complete lack of data for this part of the question.

The District's explanation of its ambitious and significant reform in persistently lowest-achieving schools/low performing schools is that it does not have any. And that in the rare occasion that one of its schools slips, it immediately corrects it. However, by looking at the Appendix, this answer belies the facts. In 2009, all of the district's schools were in Good Standing and then in 2010, one dropped that designation and then in 2011, the District had two schools not in Good Standing. The one school that is currently a Focus school, is getting district support of continuing to work with that school and giving it resources. There is very little acknowledgement of a plan for support.

Some student performance data seems to be available to educators through the TVAAS system, DiscoveryED online formative assessments, and other assessments. However, these data sets are shared with parents only via print and in-person communication. It is not stated that these are available digitally or on-line. Additionally, there is no mention of how these data sets are made available to students.

Because of a complete and utter lack of data over four years, the District has failed to answer the question of part (B)1. Though the District should be commended for its high graduation rate, there is no show of progress or sustained success., because of a lack of data provided, and the District is hovering around the state average in student achievement as evidenced by the 2011 State Report Card. There is no compelling information to show that the District has a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement or in increasing equity in learning and teaching. Additionally, the District's lack of acknowledgment of its school that have not been in Good Standing and any real, clear plan on how to deal with substandard results is troubling. Thus, the District's response is in the low range (4/15), only garnering any points because of its high graduation rate and its use of some student performance system available on a limited basis to parents.

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

The District provides information on a series of topics including salaries. The District has provided in this application salary scales for some of the different titles of employees. However, there is no indication of a specific school budget or even an average teacher salary at the school level. There is no connection between the salary scale and individual employees. The

District's budget is presented once a year to the County Commission. The District also presents all financial information to the School Board which meets monthly. The District states that these meetings are public and open to the community. Other than the salary schedules, which only indicate how much money a teacher would make depending on years of service and education attainment, the District seems to not indicate any action to make other financial information easily available. There is no stipulation of specific school budgets being accessible on-line. There is no discussion of non-personnel expenditures for each school or the District as a whole. The District's answer does not indicate a high-level of transparency of any part of the individual schools budget or the District at large. The only thing accessible seems to be a salary scale for teachers, administrators, and for extra duties such as coaching the basketball team. This is a very low sense of transparency and thus the District's response is in the low range (1/5)

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

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District has shown that there are successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. Since the District is located in a Phase 1 RTTT grant recipient State, many of the legal, statutory, and regulatory requirement already exist prior to the application. Additionally, the District has shown its ability to implement the personalized learning environments as evidences of its preliminary phase efforts. There is already a District-level data analysis effort, there is a part-time district-level Instructional Coordinator. Additionally, the State program does support the transition from high school to college and the HOPE scholarship program which funds over 14,000 students to dual enroll in college and high school. However, the District does not make mention as to how it will successfully implement its ambitious program. There is no mention of where the extra personnel will come from or how all the extra programs will effect the school district. It is clear from the District that the autonomy is there however, it is unclear if the conditions for a successful implementation exists. This answer receives a score in the high range (8/10) because there is strong evidence of State legal, statutory, and regulatory support, but a lack of explanation of how the State or District will be able to implement the proposal, the other needed "successful condition", especially with the continued description of a lack of district resources. Though the main focus of the question is on the needed autonomy, there is also a need for successful conditions from the State and there is no sense that the State will help support these programs.

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

10

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The District discusses a "blue sky" approach of brainstorming, but when the District actually explains the methods it used, it seemed to all run through administrators either on the school level or from central office. The District states that school-level administrators solicited student and teacher input regarding proposed grant components, but does not say how. Then these school-level administrators met with other administrators to discuss, evaluate and rank the components. The RTTT-D leadership team, which was tasked with processing the information was only made up of high-level administrators, without even a single school-level employee. Other stakeholders have been involved in advisory councils, partnership meetings, surveys and other forms of communications, but the level of this engagement is suspect as it is not explained other than just as their opinions were solicited.

The District does provide letters of support from all key stake holders, but these seem like perfunctory letters and signature pages without a real engagement in the conversation and creation of the proposal.

This section is in the low medium range (4/10) because though the District went through the motions of trying to touch all the constituent groups, the real decisions and conversation seems to be made only by school and district administrators.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The District approaches but does not have a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The District is aware that one of their schools did not meet AYP because they did not adequately narrow the gap between achievement. Additionally, new information from the District shows a widening of the gap between students with disabilities and not identified students. However, the District's plan is vague and lacks any real focus. The District states that it will "attack the identified problem" and use a "common sense approach," but does not stipulate what that approach is or will be other than their broad Accelerate! program. There is no specification when it comes to the differentiation needed for specific groups. Additionally, the district then launches into a discussion about how it is underfunded and lacks recourses to serve any student other than the most at risk. Though the District refers back to their Accelerate! plan it does not show how the program will specifically address the identified needs and gaps. The District receives a low, medium score (2/5) in this section because it fails to fully address the question. It will use Data Coaches and a personalized learning system, but does not have a high-quality plan of rolling it out or addressing the identified needs and gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District attempts to lay out 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, but fails to adequately describe the system or show how it will really be embedded in the school community. The District's main attempt is to use the Leader in Me program. Though there is little description of the program, other than to call it "highly-acclaimed," the District is relying on it to somehow get every student in the District to be college and career ready. Questions of how this program will support other school-wide and district-wide programs to be used by teachers, parents, or students are not discussed. Though the District states that the program will nurture each individual by aiding students in establishing and reaching their own learning objectives it does not say how. The District states that it will continue to phase in the Common Core and that will also lead toward the personalizing of the learning environment, but again it does not say how this phasing in will occur. The District's response uses many empty phrases like it will put "first things first" and it will allow students and parents to "think win-win" but it does not address how this will happen. The District does mention that there will be a structured process of career awareness and career exploration, but again how this will happen is left to the imagination of the reader. Though the District mentions that there are annual Career Fairs and a College and Career Planning System, it does not stipulate how and when the students or the families will use these programs.

To answer the questions the District says there will be a wide range of options for students and the students will be guided by their Personalized Learning Program. However, the examples given of choice, such as electives, and Advanced Placement classes are not rare or high-quality. This is the basic expectation of high school students in most American schools. What the District highlights as high-quality are typical and generic methods used around the country. Utilizing the ACT's readiness benchmark or using the internet to explore different learning option is not a high-quality plan. Furthermore, though the District says that students, parents, and school counselors will work together to support the students, it does not say how this will happen. The District receives a score in the low range (5/20) because like so much of this application, the District says it will do all that the question asks but does not say how. There is no plan of integration, incorporation, or explanation with any of the programs that it relays so heavily on. A District can't just hope that because students show a want to learn and succeed they will without an explanation of the resources that will surround them.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District attempts, but does not have 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 District shows a commitment to teacher professional development by providing the State mandated hours. But the District follows the State requirements, it does not go above or beyond and thus does not show true leadership in a high-quality plan. Following the State minimum requirements cannot be thought of as high-quality. The District should be commended for doing a needs assessment of the teachers to gain an insight into their wants. The District seems to put a lot of effort into this and creates a catalog of offerings. There is a District Wide Professional Development Leadership Team that creates this catalog. However, there seems only to be a panoply of offering where the teacher can have choice from a wide variety of options. What these choices are, is not discussed nor is any connection to personalizing the learning environment leading toward student success. In fact, there is no mention how the professional development catalog is created with the student in mind at all, only the self described wants of the teachers. The PD might be needs based, but not according to the need of improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The District's answer to the question is again littered with trite folksisms like they understand that "iron sharpens iron" and that they hope to train teachers to a point of "unconscious competence" but only points to the idea of establishing a network of Professional Collaboration Teams which will support teachers in the PD. The District does mention the creation of a New Teacher Academy to help novice teachers, but again there seems to be no connection between these supports and specifically supporting teachers in learning how to personalize the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college and career ready. Thus, this section received a score in the middle range (10/20) because of a commitment but lack of a high-quality plan for the actual improvement.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District attempts to have a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of education system with the support and resources they need. It is clear that the District wants to support the schools and over the last decade has taken steps in order to do so. It has expanded its support service to include an Instructional Coordinator, a Data Coordinator, and other district level staff. However, it is unclear how these district-wide staff members provide service to the individual schools. There is no indication that a majority of their time will be spent in the schools, with teachers, school-level administrators, or students. From the description of the program it is unclear if this is just another level of bureaucracy or true support for the schools. Like much of this application, the District says that people are afforded flexibility and autonomy, but does not mention how. Only a monthly meeting is offered as a time where there is communication between school-based personnel and district based personnel. Other than the creation of a school schedule, it seems that the district has much of the control over the school, its hiring, and the roles and responsibilities of the staff. The District seems to do a good job in creating a place where there is opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery and not time on topic. This is done with a personalized program of study where credit is earned upon completion of the material using the McNairy Individualized Graduation program. Yet, the District's examples other than MIG, of allowing students to take AP classes or Dual Enrollment classes are not ground-breaking efforts in any sense. The District attempts to give students opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and ways by stating that it uses a "learning center approach," in the younger grades and by having older students be involved in "experimental learning" which "engages their heads and their hands." However, this does not fully speak to how there are multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery at different times or ways. The District does however say that it uses a wide range of formative assessment techniques, but again does not say how, which ones, or why. Lastly, the District attempts to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible by stating that it has a proactive special education department. The District uses "Response to Intervention" and intense program monitoring, but how the schools uses it is not said. The District's response is in the medium range because it attempts to create a high-quality plan and has part of it in its proposal, but fails to fully elucidate how the plan will work. (8/15)</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District's infrastructure is geared toward supporting personalized learning. The District allows access to technology after school to parents and the high schools have a parent's night where they support working on the FAFSA. However, this is very little compared to a high-quality support. One FAFSA night workshop and limited after-school use of computers does not equate to a "high-quality" plan. Plus, it does not say how if funded the money would be used to expand the access. The District does describe how the grant would allow for stakeholders to have technical support. Having a Data Coach at each school seems to address this issue nicely. The District's application says that it allows for real-time student specific data that teachers and students have access to. Yet, it did not mention this in the previous section where it was also asked about. The District does not mention the system by name or how the parents and students have access to it. The College and Career Planning System has been discussed previously and this seems like a very good way for students and families to have a sense of progress and direction for the student. From the District's answer it is unclear if everyone has access to the on-line, real-time system or if it just has the capacity for multiple users. If the section was clearer, and the District truly allowed for parents, teachers, and students to all have access to individualized real-time data it would be possible to rate this answer in the high category, but because the response is too vague, it must be rated in the medium category. (5/10)</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District attempts to have a high-quality approach to continuously improving its plan. By using the assessment measures mentioned in the Accelerate! Program, the District will have a good sense of how things are going. The creation of the Accelerate! District Leadership Team will give a voice to any changes needs and the PD Coaches and Data Coaches will be school level personnel who will observe the day-to-day operations and effectiveness. The only thing lacking is a real commitment or clarity of publicly sharing the on-going work. The District just states that the Director will share information with the public, with the help of the Community Relations Committee. This is not fleshed out. However, this is a strong high-quality</p>		

approach with both a District level and school level management structure. Thus the District receives a grade in the high range for this answer. (12/15)

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District does have strategies for ongoing communication and engagement including parent meetings, teacher training, and district-wide meetings. The District seems committed to sharing the program's progress with the entire community. The section is in the high range (4/5) because of the District's show of an ongoing communication and engagement effort, with newsletters, telephone messages, websites, and multiple public meetings.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District does present ambitious yet achievable performance measures with a clear rationale for selecting the measures as well as how it will review and improve over time. The District is choosing to use subject specific CCR benchmarks as shown by PLAN, EXPLORE, and ACT. This are highly respected programs and organizations that have a strong alignment with College and Career Readiness standards. The District's response is in the high range (4/5) because it is clear that it is using strong diagnostic tools that align with quality performance measures.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The District has a clear plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-D grant. As already stated earlier in this section, the District will evaluate the use of the multiple programs used, see how it compares to how the students are progressing and adjust accordingly. The District will also create a formal evaluation with surveys and other feedback from all the stakeholders. By leaning on both formal and informal data collections, a truer picture of the effectiveness of the grant will be shown. This answer falls in the high range (4/5) because it shows a commitment to gain the voice of all the stakeholders as well as compare the thoughts of the participants with the realities of the students' progress.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The District's budget for the project is clear and well thought out. It funds the programs that are the cornerstone of the Accelerate! Program and is aligned with the goals of the grant. The response also clearly delineates between the one-time investments and those monies used for ongoing operational costs. The Budget does a very good job in showing how each project talked about in the proposal will be funded and why. Be it the funding for the Data Coach or the Peak Performance Training. This answer is in the high range (8/10) because the budget speaks to how and why the money will be spent.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant attempts to have a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the program. It is true that the initial investment in programs such as the Leader in Me and Peak Performance Training are sunk costs that do not need to be re-upped after the grant. Additionally, the cost of professional development will not need to be spent if, as the districts states, others can turnkey the PD after the grant period. Also, all of the technology that is purchased will be available after the grant is over. However, the District's explanation of how the additional personnel will either be phased out or incorporated within the District's budget fails to seem viable or reasonable. For instance, the ending of the Data Coach position at all of the schools will leave a large whole in the data analysis piece. The only explanation given by the District is that by the end of the grant the staff will be trained. There is a large difference between having one expert at each school and a trained staff person. And since more than half of the proposed grant is allocated to personnel and fringe it is hard to see how the program will continue at the same strength after the grant is gone. Thus, the plan for sustainability of the grant is in the medium range (4/10) as the program changes can continue after the grant, but the personnel additions seem less likely.</p>		

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The District attempts to make a compelling argument that they should receive a competitive preference priority because of their proposed partnership with Southwest Health Technology Foundation. A large part of the strength of the District's proposal rests on the Peak Performance Training. The positive change of this neuro-feedback program is attested to in documents prepared by the District. However, the District does not indicate that the relationship between the District and SHTE is anything other than a contractual purchase. Thus, the program sounds great and seems to produce good results, but it does not seem like a partnership, merely a purchase of services. The District also does not seem to propose any other partnership or incorporation with any other public or private organization. The District makes an extremely compelling case that Peak Performance Training helps support students and would be used in a positive way to target help, be able to scale the model and build capacity of the staff. Thus this answer is in the medium range (4/10) because the District shows how the partnership will lead toward results and could be sustainable (because staff will be trained in the program) but does not show a true partnership of shared costs, responsibility or accountability.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The District coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. The Accelerate! program is at once comprehensive and individualized. From an pointed investment in human capital with a focus on leadership development through the Leader in Me program and the founding of a Leadership Academy, the creation of a data coach for every school, the starting of professional collaboration teams between and among education professionals, and incentive pay to an acknowledgement of needing to offer more and varied learning opportunity through extended learning time and special summer learning opportunities. The District is also committed to improving technology to better suit the needs of the students. However, how the Accelerate! program will truly move students to be college and career ready is much more vague. There is not a clear understanding of specific learning or teaching changes or a systemic pedagogical change that is to occur. There is a belief that just more professional development and the creation of personalized learning plans for every student will lead toward success. Thus, the District does met the absolute priority, but not in an exceptionally strong manner.

Total	210	106
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0463TN-2 for McNairy County School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (A)(1), the applicant does include a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that focuses on the four core areas defined in the notice, and their approach does articulate a clear and credible approach.</p> <p>Within their plan, they are proposing to invest in Human Capital, including a personalized learning plan for each student, a Data/Tech Coach for each school, leadership development for all stakeholders, Professional Collaboration Teams in each school, job-embedded professional development; a Leadership Academy; an Empower Parent Involvement Program; and the facilitation of at home learning; community partnerships. They are also proposing to invest in Infrastructure, including upgraded 21st century classrooms; wireless networks and a Bring Your Own Device initiative; electronic textbooks and other electronic sources; extended learning time; and summer learning opportunities.</p> <p>Evidence for their plan being a credible approach comes from them building upon previously successful reform efforts in their district (often for high-risk students), and ensuring that they are available for all students. No real evidence was provided, however, that adding such previous reforms will indeed work for all students as proposed.</p> <p>The response scores in the middle range for this category.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (A)(2)(a-c), the application provides evidence regarding the applicant's approach to implementation. This section of the application does not detail the process for selecting the schools, but simply indicates that all schools within the district will be participating (item a), and includes sheets with teacher signatures from each of the 8 schools and from the central office to demonstrate support from each of those schools. When comparing the number of signatures to the total number of teachers within each school (as noted in their demographic profile table), you can see that a significant portion of teachers have signed, but not all (e.g., 52 of the 90.5 in Selmer Elementary; 58 of 79 in Central HS). A later section details the process used by the district to gather input and support from each of the schools and other important stakeholders.</p> <p>In reference (b) and (c), the application does include the list of the 8 schools, and all required all requested information (i.e., number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators</p> <p>The overall response falls within the high range for this category.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (A)(3), the applicant proposes to implement their reform strategies in all 8 schools within their district, and offers evidence that existing curricular offerings and reform are already driving change in the district. By significantly adding to the existing reforms already showing promise, the applicant's plan does indicate how their theory of change will improve learning outcomes for all students in their district. The applicant, however, fails to offer all aspects of a high-quality plan within this section, offering only some general timelines and strategies to be implemented (and thus missing things like deliverables and responsible parties). Given such missing information, this response scores in the middle range for this category.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (A)(4) (a-d), the applicant details baseline and target goals for a number of assessments and indicators, including students overall and as broken down by various important subcategories (i.e., economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, LEP, white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian).</p> <p>For performance on summative assessments (item a), the applicant plans to use proficiency status data from their state exams in 3rd and 7th, reading and math, as well as end-of-course exams for Algebra I and English II. For growth data, they plan to use their state value-added scores from these same assessments.</p> <p>In reference to decreasing achievement gaps (item b), the application includes baseline data for each of the assessments noted above, and include small incremental projected gap decreases.</p>		

In reference to graduation rates (item c), the application includes baseline data for each subcategory of students, and includes small incremental increases.

In reference to college enrollment (item d), the application includes baseline data for each subcategory of students, and includes small incremental increases. On the graduation data table, there is a concern noted with data provided for low SES, Blacks and Hispanics, whereby the baseline for these is noted as very low, and a 4-year goal of only 22.5% for low SES, 3.8% for Blacks and 0.8% for Hispanics students attending college upon graduation.

Overall, the application has offered good baseline data for many assessments, and their annual growth targets for each of their many subcategories are ambitious, yet achievable (offering steady and consistent growth for all students) The overall response is placed within the middle range range.

**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	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (B)(1)(a), the applicant provides some evidence that they have a record of success during the past 4 years. They provide summary data from the state's accountability program (which requires increased proficiency levels each year), revealing that 6 of their 8 schools have maintained "good standing" for the past 4 years (noting that this means the AYP targets for nine subgroups were met). In addition, 3 of their 8 schools were within the state's 166 elite "Reward" schools, those ranking in the top 5% for performance and/or in the top 5% for progress. However, only limited raw data was provided (comparing 2010 to 2011), and this was only provided for grades as a whole, not broken down by major subgroups (except it was noted that for their African American students, their reading scores went from 14% proficiency in 2010 to 24% proficiency in 2011). Therefore it was not possible to look at individual subgroups to see to what extent the achievement gap was closed.</p> <p>In reference to graduation rates, data for only two years were offered, going from 93.0% in 2010 to 93.1% in 2011 (with such percentages well above the state average of 85.5%). No graduation data was provided for any subgroup breakdowns. In reference to college enrollment, no actual data was provided.</p> <p>For (B)(1)(b), the applicant indicates that they have not had any persistently low-performing schools, but offers information that shows when two of their schools slipped to "target" status, they returned to "good standing" and even then "reward." This reveals a level of success in achieving reforms in such schools.</p> <p>For (B)(1)(c), the applicant notes how they have access to student-level data (via state and local assessment measures), make available such information to educators and parents on a regular basis, and use such data to make decisions with regard to resource allocation, early personalized intervention, and the provision of meaningful and relevant professional development designed to equip teachers to meet identified needs.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the middle range for this category.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (B)(2), the applicant offers evidence regarding financial transparency, detailing the extent to which school-level data is publicly presented to various boards and available as public documents upon request at the school and district level. However, the applicant does not specifically indicate that such data is currently broken down based on the Census Bureau's classifications, nor are examples offered as to how this information is easily made available to all parents and interested stakeholders. The response is in the middle range for this category.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (b)(3) the applicant has provided evidence that their state and local policy environment includes sufficient autonomy and support to implement their proposed reforms, leading to a personalized learning environment. These include a state-level preK-college student data tracking system, and initial training and support via their RTTT-state program. This response falls in the high range.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In reference to (B)(4)(a) and (b), the applicant provided significant evidence that they had engaged in a process to obtain meaningful stakeholder input and support for their proposed reforms. Signatures of over 95% of the teachers in the district were provided, as was the signature of the teacher's union and many letters of support from community leaders, businesses, parents, and students. It was also noted that the input received from various stakeholders were used to refine their reform plans. The response is in the high range.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (B)(5), the applicant did not offer the elements of a high quality plan to analyze their gaps and needs. Instead, they noted that there are already aware of their gaps (given extensive state and local data), and have clearly identified how to address their identified needs and gaps via their district strategic plan. The applicant clearly offers the logic behind their proposal, but since the elements of a high quality plan regarding current and future needs analysis were not present (e.g., key goals, activities &amp; timelines, deliverables, responsible parties), their score is in the middle range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (C)(1)(a)(i-v), the applicant addresses some of the requested information, but not in the form of a high quality plan that includes specific goals, responsible parties, and deliverables for these specific outcomes. The applicant indicates they will be using <i>The Leader in You</i> program curriculum, to help all students understand that what they are learning is key to their goals(i); and identify and pursue goals are linked to college and career-ready standards (ii). But the applicant lacks details as to how they would ensure that all students will come to understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and to measure progress toward those goals (ii); how they all will be involved in deep learning experiences (iii); and all will master critical academic content (v).</p> <p>For (C)(1)(b)(i-iv), the applicant addresses some of the requested information, but not in the form of a high quality plan that includes specific goals, responsible parties, and deliverables for these specific outcomes. The applicant offers only general information regarding the use of the Common Standards for all students, as supplemented by currently available etracurricular and/or elective offerings. No details are offered to ensure a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments (ii); high-quality content (iii), and ongoing and regular feedback for all students (v). The applicant offers nothing on accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students (v).</p> <p>For (C)(1)(c), the applicant does address the requested information, and does offer some detail on specific activities and responsible parties for these outcomes. The applicant notes that school administrators will work with their Instructional Coaches, their new proposed Data/Tech Coach, and others to identify and train student peer support personnel. Homeroom teachers will also play a key role in helping to ensure that students understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.</p> <p>Overall, given the lack of details as required for a high quality plan for these areas, the response scores in the lower end of the middle range.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (C)(2)(a)(i-iv), the applicant provides much of the requested information, but not in the form of a high quality plan that includes specific goals, responsible parties, and deliverables for these specific outcomes. The applicant provides evidence that a strong system of professional development opportunities is already available, and at least 30 hours are required for each teacher each year. There is evidence that teachers are able to select from a large menu of training opportunities, based upon an individualized professional development plan developed in conjunction with their principal (and as drive by data from their teacher evaluation system). The applicant notes that professional collaboration teams will be created, to better support job-</p>		

embedded support.

For (C)(2)(b)(i-iii), the applicant does address some of requested information (i.e., acquiring actionable information) , and does offer some detail on specific activities and responsible parties for these outcomes. Missing is information on how all teachers will have access to high-quality learning resources including digital resources, and training on how to match students needs with specific resources and approaches.

For (C)(2)(c), the applicant indicates that they already have in place much of the system needed to ensure that their school leaders and leadership teams have the needed training, policies and tools to structure an effective learning environment, including information from various sources, and professional development support for teachers. The applicant indicates that multi-option professional growth matrix is being developed and will provide some financial incentive for enhanced teacher training (and to enhance morale and reduce teacher absenteeism). High quality plan details regarding timelines and responsible parties for the development of this matrix were not included.

For (C)(2)(d), the applicant indicates that they do not currently have problems in finding high quality staff, and that through their PD and teacher evaluation system they will work to increase the number of teachers who do not meet expectations to become effective or highly effective. No details, however, were offered as part of a high quality plan to accomplish this goal (e.g., timelines, responsible parties).

Overall, given the lack of some details as required for a high quality plan for each of these areas, the response scores in the upper end of the middle range.

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

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>For (D)(1)(a), the applicant indicates that they already have organized their central office to provide support and services to all of their schools (with the grant allowing them to put into place even more support), and offered some concrete examples as evidence (e.g., district-level an Instructional Coordinator, a Data/Intervention Coordinator, a Transition Coordinator, a Math Instructional Coordinator, a Director of School Health, and a School Home Coordinator).</p> <p>For (D)(1)(b), the applicant indicates that they already provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy.</p> <p>For (D)(1)(c), the applicant indicates that they already have in place for some students an Individualized Graduation program, building an individualized program for standards not yet mastered. They also mention that they have individualized options for advanced students, but that they need to do more within establishing individualized programs for all students. Yet, the application does not include any of the elements of a high quality plan to accomplish this goal (e.g., timelines, responsible parties, deliverables).</p> <p>For (D)(1)(d), the applicant indicates that they already are providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple comparative ways. However, no concrete examples were offered to illustrate that this was occurring for all students, nor were there high quality plan elements offered to ensure this occurred.</p> <p>For (D)(1)(e), the applicant indicates that they already are providing learning experiences and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to their students with disabilities and English learners, and offered some concrete examples of such support.</p> <p>Overall, given the lack of some details as required for a high quality plan for each of these areas, the response scores in the middle of the middle range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

For (D)(2)(a), the applicant provides no real evidence that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have access to the necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of their proposal. They simply indicate that access to available technology would improve in comparison to current access.

For (D)(2)(b), the applicant provides limited evidence that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have appropriate levels of technical support. They indicate that students will have additional tech support during the day via the additional Data/Tech Coachs and other personnel, and that support to others will be available via frequently-asked-questions & answers posted on the web, and technical support e-mail system.

For (D)(2)(c), the applicant provides some evidence that the district would be using 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. They note that students and parents currently have access to grades, attendance calendars, and communication as posted by teachers. In addition, the grant would provide for a College and Career Planning System including a digital portfolio that each student can maintain and access. No evidence, however, was provided that such data can be exported by students or parents, and used within other electronic learning systems.

For (D)(2)(d), the applicant provides significant evidence that the LEA and its schools do use interoperable data systems for their HR data, student information, budget and instructional improvement data. Examples includes the State Data System which tracks budget, HR, and student achievement data, as well as the state systems for the teacher evaluation data and the value-added assessment data.

Overall, the applicant provided solid evidence for one criteria (d), some evidence for (b& c), and no real evidence for (a), and thus is scored in the lower part of the middle range.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (E)(1), the applicant provides general evidence for a plan to implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for corrections. The plan identifies key responsible parties whereby there will be an overall Project Director, who receives at least monthly reports from the Instructional/PD Coaches and the Data/Tech Coaches at each school regarding the effectiveness of strategies being employed by teachers and others. On-going adjustments to practice are planned as needed. In addition, the plan calls for using the state and local assessment data as benchmarks for progress. The plan also calls for publicly sharing evaluation data, but no details offered on how or when.</p> <p>Overall, this application does outline a strategy to meet this criteria, however, it does not detail all elements of a high -quality approach, including specific goals, timelines, and deliverables. This response is rated in the middle range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (E)(2), the applicant offers good evidence of their plan to offer ongoing communication and engagement. This section of the proposal offers specific implementation timelines for the first year of the project, as well as activities and deliverables. It identifies the responsible parties to include the Project Director, the project leadership team, and the principals at each school. Input and communication strategies to be accomplished are noted, including public meetings, newsletters, and digital communication. This response is in the high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For (E)(3), the applicant provides evidence of meeting the expectations of proposing ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant offered such data in tables, and depending how you count them (e.g., are 4th grade and 7th grade math</p>		

assessments one assessment or two?), they far exceed the expected 12-14 performance measures.

In addition to the specific required indicators, for the applicant-proposed measures, the applicant described the rationale for selecting that measure, how it connects to their proposed plan, and how it would will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress. For example, for the social-emotional measure at each of the preK-3, 4-8, and 9-12 levels, they propose to track disciplinary referrals since part of their reform efforts (*The Leader in Me*) is slated to improve such actions. They also note that if school-level referrals decrease to a low level that no longer allow adequate measurement, then they would turn to teacher reported behavior. For the college-and-career readiness measure at the 4-8 and 9-12 levels, they propose to use the subject-specific CCR bands in the PLAN, EXPLORE, and ACT assessments (with no adjustment likely given current low baseline levels). They will use the Brigance K readiness for the early focus indicator, and will adjust to a preK to 4 comparison as needed.

For all measures, the plan proposes small incremental improvements each year, adequate and realistic enough to be considered ambitious yet achievable. The response scores in the high range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

For (E)(4), the applicant restated their plans to evaluate the effectiveness of their RTTT-District funded activities, via the collection of various data, and thus provided evidence for part of this criteria. What was not offered is any information on how they would more productively use time, staff, money or other resources in order to improve results they obtain via such evaluation. The response scored in the middle range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For (F)(1)(a-c), the applicant provides detailed budget sheets and narratives which identified all funds that would support the project, appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal, and offers thoughtful rationale for the proposed investments and priorities. In support of item c, the proposal does identify multiple sources of existing funding to help support the grant, and clearly identifies activities which are on-going or one-time in nature.

Additional rationale was warranted for the over \$1 million proposed to be used to provide \$500 or \$1,000 stipends to teachers meeting goals on a "multi-level professional performance matrix." Given that this activity involves over 10% of their entire budget, not having this multi-level professional performance matrix included in the proposal, nor detailed plans for its creation, raises questions about this item.

Given the overall good level of detail, rationale and connectiveness to the proposal (other than the 1 area noted above), this response scores in the lower end of the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

For (F)(2), the applicant describes how they will be able to sustain the grant activities after the term of the grant, including the use of federal title funds and community partnership resources. Good information was offered as to which activities were one-time in nature (e.g., the use of Data/Tech Coaches at each school; the Leadership in Me training; initial implementation costs of wireless networks), and others that could be continued to some degree with other funds. However, inadequate details were offered for this response to be considered a high quality plan, in that key goals, activities, responsible parties, etc were not illuminated. The response scores in the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (1), the applicant provided evidence of a coherent and sustainable partnership to provide neurofeedback treatment for students who have brain dysregulation that inhibits learning in the school settings. Details provided included the services to be provided, who the responsible parties, timelines, and how this would assist the applicant in their overall reform efforts.</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (2), the applicant does offer several population-level goals that align with the overall proposal, and which include educational outcomes (i.e., master content of Common Core State Standards), and family and community support (i.e., improved behavioral results including improved attention and focus).</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (3)(a-d), the applicant does offer evidence to meet this criteria. It notes how the data will be tracked over time for both the students receiving the services and the overall grant population (item a); that the students targeted will be those with disabilities, those affected by poverty or other child welfare issues (item b); that the district will have acquired the technology and knowledge for providing this service on their own by the end of the grant, and will be able to scale it up as necessary to meet the needs of more students (item c); and discusses their hopes for continued results for more students over time.</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (4), the applicant does offer evidence to meet this criteria to demonstrate how the partnership with the Southwest Health Technology Foundation would assist in the integration of educational and the neurofeedback services. The district's special education staff and school counselors will work to develop the protocol for referral and prioritization of services and to integrate this into a student's personalized learning plan, merging the brain training sessions into a student's educational schedule.</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (5)(a-e), the applicant does offer evidence to meet this criteria. The application notes that district personnel will deliver the neurofeedback services under the direction of the external consultant partner, learning how to access the needs and assets of participating students and create the infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports (items a, b &amp; c); that the parents and families of participating students will be involved in the decisionmaking, and will be engaged via their proposed Empower Parent Involvement Program (items c &amp; d).</p> <p>For the competitive preference priority item (6), the applicant does offer some evidence to meet this criteria. They do offer some population-level desired results (e.g., improved attention, mental function, and focus), but they do not include any baseline or target metrics. They also indicate that they hoped to impact their the goals and targets set for standardized assessment improvements in math and english (using the broader goals set for these areas for the project as whole).</p> <p>Overall, given the evidence noted above, this response scores in the upper range.</p>		

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

In reference to the Absolute Priority 1: Personalized learning Environments, the applicant has provided more than adequate evidence (as detailed in each criteria section) that their proposed plan does coherently and comprehensively address how they will build on core educational assurance areas to create learning environments designed to significantly improve learning and teaching in their district.

Total	210	132
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0463TN-3 for McNairy County School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the middle range as the narrative provides an articulated vision for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The narrative identifies two major areas under the "ACCELERATE!" project, via the implementation of several high-leverage action items to realize the "ACCELERATE!" vision. In the plan's delineation of action items, this reader was unable to locate specific details in order to determine whether the project articulates a credible approach to the goals under the RTTT-D grant proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader unable to locate a plan for implementation of personalized learning plans (PLPs), and how the Data/Tech coaches will used within the implementation of PLPs.</li> <li>• Reader unable to identify how the proposed Leadership Development directions will be tied to specific, explicitly determined student needs identified within the LEA. No indication as to how these needs will be/have been identified.</li> </ul>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the medium range as the narrative shows all schools in the district have committed to the RTTT-D plan via signed Statements of Support. Tables in the body of the narrative provide listing of the schools in the district, as well as the numbers of students in the subgroups targeted by RTTT-D. This reader was unable to ascertain from evidence provided in the appendix if the signers to the Statements of Support are instructional or clerical staff or a combination.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the middle range as the narrative provides description of a transformation model and implementation plan, but lacks clarify in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of the successful curriculum, instructional practices, resources, structures, and methods at the three district "Rewards Schools" to be replicated.</li> <li>• Evidence of effectiveness of the "Leader in Me" transformation model either within the district or based on vendor evidence.</li> </ul>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the low medium range as the evidence provided shows improved student performance, but the data does not</p>		

show a narrowing or elimination of achievement gaps over the a 5-year period. The applicant’s vision for the ACCELERATE! project delineates growth in achievement scores in general (Overall), yet projections do not show a pattern of narrowing of the achievement gap between Overall performance and the identified subgroups.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade TCAP Math
  - growth targeted at 26% Overall
  - no gap closure between Overall and ED, SD, White, or Black subgroups over 5 years
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade TCAP RLA
  - growth targeted at 36% Overall
  - slight increase (0.5 %pts) in achievement gap between Overall and ED, SD over 5 years
  - slight decrease (0.5 % pts) in achievement gap between Overall and Black subgroup over 5 years
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade TCAP Math
  - growth targeted at 37% Overall
  - slight increase (0.7 %pts) in achievement gap between Overall and ED and SD over 5 years
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade TCAP RLA
  - growth targeted at 31% Overall
  - slight increase in achievement gap between Overall and ED (0.8% pts) and Overall and SD (0.6% pts).
- Algebra 1 End of Course Exam
  - growth target at 17% overall
  - significant increase (1.3% pts) in achievement gap between Overall and ED and SD over 5 years.
  - White subgroup projected to fall below Overall performance, with the gap showing significant widening over 5 years.

**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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)

The evidence provided indicates meeting or slightly surpassing state proficiency benchmarks in: K-8 Math, Rdg/ Lang Arts; 9-12 Math and Rdg/ Lang Arts in 2011. Information is vague in that it only shows ranking of district schools by “Achievement Status”.

- Two schools listed as “target” status in 2011. One has moved to “reward” and the other to “focus” status. No clear explanation as to the meaning of “focus” status, nor indications of district response to the designation.
- Belonging to the HSTW network since 1990, no evidence provided to show results explicitly due to membership and activities.
- Evidence of extended learning opportunities provided. No evidence provided to show results explicitly due to activities.

(B)(1)(a) and (b)

**Raising Student Achievement**

- Narrative indicates African-American subgroup did not meet AYP targets, but no evidence/data provided the district has determined factors contributing to the lack of progress for this subgroup or how the district intends to identify the factors affecting achievement for this subgroup.

**Raising High School Grad Rates**

Clear evidence the district has a strong record of success with grad rates (93% rate), with support structures in place to intervene to help students create an individualized program toward graduation.

Raising College Enrollment Rates

- While the narrative outlines several programs/ partnerships, no data provided to support this section.

(B)(1)(c)

The narrative describes how the state's TVAAS tool(s) provide trajectories for student achievement patterns:

- Data provided to parents, but no clear description as to how the data is used/shared out by current data coaches.
- No clear description as to how data is or will be used by PLTs.

This section was scored in the middle range as it lacked specificity in demonstrating a clear track record of success. While the narrative includes statements supporting the tenants of the grant requirements, the proposal lacks clear indication of a plan on how student performance data will be used to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the high middle range as there was indication of a relatively high level of transparency in the LEA processes, practices, and investments. However, the narrative provides minimal information related to personnel salaries. Unclear if the schedule provided refers to instructional and/or support staff. Information on administrative salaries only provides a schedule of percentage increments, with no baseline figures to determine actual administrative salary step and/or column costs.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the medium range as narrative shows evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to allow the district leeway in devising and sustaining a personalized learning environment for students. The State has provided access to and implemented policies to support development of highly personalized learning environments,

Supporting evidence includes:

- State-level policies implemented to streamline to assist with the transition from high school to college
- The State' Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) makes it possible for the district to receive and match PreK-12 data with higher education data.
- The Tennessee District Strategic Plan (TDSP) provides the district with accountability data and status
  - The Data/Intervention Coordinator is leading district-level data analysis, but this reader was unable to determine how this work is/will be accomplished.
  - The Instructional Coordinator works with novice teachers , but this reader was unable to determine what specifically this work entails.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the high middle range as the narrative does indicate the process by which staff were involved in initial brainstorming activities, but lacks specificity as described in the following subsections.</p> <p>(B)(4)(a)</p> <p>The narrative specific to stakeholder engagement identifies several broad communication mechanisms used, yet does not indicate how teachers were involved beyond initial “blue sky” brainstorming. The narrative contains sufficient reference to participation of central office administration but lacks detail as to how site administrators interfaced with the RTT-D Leadership Team during planning.</p> <p>(B)(4)(a)(i)</p> <p>The narrative reflects substantial district support as evidenced by signed documents from the district’s eight school sites. What is not clear on these documents are the roles and positions held by the signers. The narrative goes on to indicate the use of a fact sheet in educating staff, presumably teachers, about the proposal, but does not indicate how staff were directly engaged in the development of the proposal beyond the initial brainstorming mentioned above.</p> <p>(B)(4)(b)</p> <p>The narrative includes reference to recent awarding of a GEAR-UP grant to the state of Tennessee. There is no specific indication that efforts have been undertaken to articulate the work of GEAR-UP into the RTT-D proposal beyond mentioning GEAR-UP coordinating student readiness for college.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the low middle range as it provides an inadequate plan for analysis of the district’s implementation plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The narrative adequately outlines areas of needs and gaps within subgroup data, with mention of need for further analysis. However, the narrative does not detail where resources should be focused, nor which services should be implemented.</li> <li>• While there is mention that district leaders use a common-sense approach to decision making, there is no clear evidence of an evaluation protocol for determining when a strategy or process is proven effective or not.</li> <li>• Detailed listing of programs and services used in the district, with specific mention that current services reserved almost exclusively for at-risk students. It is not clear how data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the listed programs or specifically how services get targeted to students comprising the subgroups detailed in the proposal.</li> </ul>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the low middle range as the proposal lacks specificity in several key areas as described below:</p> <p>(C)(1)(a)(i-v)</p> <p>The narrative lacks specificity as to the instructional strategies to be implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention is made of using “The Leader in Me” (TLIM) program for the desired outcomes in this subsection, but the proposal does not clearly delineate the instructional strategies to be employed.</li> <li>• No mention of a plan and/or timeline on how students will be involved in identifying goals, planning their learning program, and revising that plan over the course of their high school careers.</li> </ul>		

- While the narrative explains how TLIM will be used to promote acquisition of emotional intelligence and “soft skills”, it is not clear how instructionally these skill sets and behavioral items will be embedded into the academic program supporting a student's individualized course of study AND help a student be involved in deep learning experiences within their program of study.

(C)(1)(b)(i-iv)

The narrative makes mention of using traditional means (presumably traditional classroom lecture/participation), computer-aided learning, as well as a hybrid approach to meeting student needs.

- No mention as to how digital learning content will be vetted for high quality content, access, and for alignment to college- & career-ready standards.
- While ACT readiness subject-area benchmarks will be used, it is not clear whether these tools are used at the elementary school level, how often these assessment tools are/will be utilized, nor how their data is/will be used as formative measures. It is not clear if the ACT tools are applicable to the elementary grades.
- No mention of accommodations for high-need students.

(C)(1)(c)

The narrative mentions use of site administration, counselors, Data Tech/Coach, the Transition Coordinator, and Instructional Coach to build school-level plans for training and support. Students will be trained as peer support personnel, and homeroom teachers will assist students in managing both hard files and digital portfolios. No evidence of protocols and/or processes to be used to realize these plans. The proposal lacks evidence as to what will be done for elementary grade students.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the middle range as the proposal provides convincing evidence of extensive professional development opportunities for teachers but does not clearly identify how the professional development will be evaluated to determine improvement or adaptation of instruction or the increasing of capacity to support student progress.

(C)(2)(a)(i-iv)

There is evidence of extensive, district-supported professional development opportunities for all teachers. All teachers are required to attend 30 hours of PD. Yearly evaluations contribute to the planning and selection of PD sessions by both the teacher and site administration. However, the proposal does not provide specific information in the following areas:

- No clear delineation as to how PCT data will be monitored vertically and horizontally in order to support student progress through the school system:
- No clear protocol/process as to how PCTs will analyze data and then report findings; or, how data will be used to determine scope of work by site and/or by district.
- There is no mention as to how the feedback will be used to improve principals' practice and effectiveness.

(C)(2)(b)(i-iii)

There is evidence that the district's Teacher Academy can be utilized so all staff receive PD support. The proposal states that site-level Data/Tech Coaches and Instructional PD Coaches will use data to help teachers adapt instructional strategies to best meet student needs.

- What is not clear is how this data will be leveraged both vertically and horizontally across the district.
- The narrative does not delineate a protocol that will be used to determine high-quality learning resources, including digital resources and how these resources will be matched to student needs.

(C)(2)(c)(i-ii)

Evidence exists that site administration and leadership teams routinely use data gleaned from the state's teacher evaluation system (TEAM) to determine how best to address continuous school improvement as it relates to teacher effectiveness.

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>This section was scored in the high medium range as there was reasonable evidence that the district has a plan to support project implementation via policies and infrastructure that support personalized learning. While the narrative indicates the district has created personalized learning for at-risk students by providing interventions involving traditional, digital and hybrid learning, it is unclear to this reader what these interventions are specifically.</p> <p>(D)(1)(a)</p> <p>The narrative supports adequate central office organization. The district-level Leadership team is comprised of a majority of district support service staff, including an Instructional Coordinator, a Data/Intervention Coordinator, a Transition Coordinator, a Math Instructional Coordinator, a PreK Director, a Director of Coordinated School Health, and a School-Home Coordinator. It is not clear to this reader which support service staff will actually sit on the Leadership Team.</p> <p>(D)(1)(b)</p> <p>The narrative indicates support for all initiative stipulations. This reader was unable to locate the specific practices, policies, and rules alluded to in this section of the narrative.</p> <p>(D)(1)(c)</p> <p>The narrative indicates the LEA supports personalized learning, with progress based on demonstrated mastery. Evidence indicates a comprehensive process that allows for differentiation of the instructional program for secondary students (MIG). Teachers build a personalized program of study for each MIG participant. The reader was unable to identify specifically how the mastery-based approach has "taken root" in other areas of the district's organization.</p> <p>(D)(1)(d)</p> <p>The narrative puts forth the District facilitates personalized learning by giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and through multiple comparable ways. This reader was unable to determine specifically which students, how often, and with what measures. The proposal does not clearly detail the "learning center approach" mentioned.</p> <p>(D)(1)(e)</p> <p>The narrative provides reference to use of RTI and progress monitoring to inform the selection of instructional practices and learning resources. This reader was unable to determine the specific resources or practices employed by the Spec. Ed. Department to ensure program equity as stated in this section.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the high middle range as it adequately addresses sufficient infrastructure to support a personalized learning program.</p> <p>(D)(2)(a)</p> <p>The proposal lacks specificity as to how the district will expand on its current limited accessibility to technology outside of school time.</p> <p>(D)(2)(b)</p> <p>The narrative does not clearly address how district technical support will be expanded and supported. It is not clear what is meant by local support or peer support.</p> <p>(D)(2)(c)</p> <p>The narrative sufficiently addresses use of information technology systems to allow for export of information and use of data.</p> <p>(D)(2)(d)</p>		
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The narrative shows sufficient infrastructure to support a personalized learning program. The district utilizes several tech structures at the local level as well several made available by the state, and is working to incorporate these systems as efficient and effective management tools.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the middle range as there is inadequate detail as to how the district will measure the quality of its programs, processes and protocols.</p> <p>The narrative does not support a rigorous process of continuous improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While meetings and proposed topics of discussion have been outlined, no evaluation protocols have been shared.</li> <li>• There is vague reference to "other" sources for performance measures as a means to gauge attainment of desired outcomes</li> <li>• There is no reference to how progress realized by the grant will be extended beyond the life of the grant.</li> </ul> <p>There is minimal reference to how information will be shared with the public.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the high range. The narrative includes an outline of benchmark activities to be accomplished during the first seven months after securing the award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing communication and engagement activities include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ There is mention of the BYOD initiative to be launched with grant implementation. Specifics surrounding this initiative are unclear.</li> <li>◦ Role-specific trainings and formulation of a communications campaign to commence with the hiring of Project Director and the Data/Tech Coaches and Instructional PD Coaches.</li> <li>◦ Slate of professional development offerings will be released to meet implementation needs of all educators.</li> <li>◦ Series of public meeting will be conducted to help students and families transition to the transformed school environment</li> <li>◦ Technology will work on creating wall-to-wall Wi-Fi network</li> <li>◦ Use of newsletters, mass phone messaging, electronic communications, digital content hosted on the district website to keep all stakeholders continuously apprised of project developments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section was scored in the low medium range as the narrative includes sufficient rationale for the selection of performance measures related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A social-emotional indicator to track disciplinary referrals in the given grade bands as it relates to the <i>Leader in Me</i> (TLIM) leadership development work under the ACCELERATE! action plan. It is hoped TLIM will significantly reduce discipline issues, thereby allowing students more focus and energy to learn. However, this reader is not clear as to how the collection of disciplinary information will be correlated to improved achievement and thus reviewed and/or improved over time if insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</li> </ul>		

- The college- and career-readiness of students by tracking specific data under the ACT readiness subject-area benchmarks provided by the EXPLORE, and ACT program, as current statistics indicate "sub-par" readiness levels. However, this reader was unable to ascertain how this measure will be reviewed and/or improved over time if insufficient to gage implementation progress.
- The readiness of all incoming students for kindergarten by tracking the year-to-year percentage of students who meet readiness benchmark on the Brigance screening test. Narrative indicates data will be used to assess effectiveness of the cradle-to-college Empower Parent Involvement Program.

Several performance measures do not support ambitious yet achievable performance measures.

- Performance Measure (Grade 4-8 - a):
  - data shows an increase of only 24 students Overall (an increase of 7.6% points) to the number who will be on track for college- and career-readiness by SY 2016-17, post grant.
  - data shows an increase of only 3 students each to the White and Black subgroup categories (an increase of 7.0 and 7.3 points respectively) to the number who will be on track for college- and career-readiness by SY 2016-17, post grant.
- Performance Measure (Grade 9-12 - c):
  - data shows an increase of only 22 students Overall (an increase of 7.6% points) to the number who will be on track for college- and career-readiness by SY 2016-17, post grant.
  - data shows an increase of only 22 students Overall (an increase of 7.9% points) to the number who will be on track for career-ready by SY 2016-17, post grant.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored at the low range as the narrative provides inadequate detail regarding strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of funded activities. No specifics are provided as to the plan for evaluation, nor are there protocols or processes delineated for evaluation. There is vague reference to the use of observations by district-level personnel to report on the effectiveness of processes and protocols employed toward grant activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the medium range as the narrative indicates grant funds will be utilized to:

- develop personalized learning plans for each student PreK through college,
- implement an individualized approach in developing, evaluating, and retaining teachers through quality professional development
- conducting variety of family and community involvement activities to empower and engage all families and community stakeholders.

Approximately 52% of the budget directed to expanding human capital in order to address the first two targets listed above. Another 45% devoted to infrastructure components of technology and extended time to allow for the implementation of opportunities beyond the contract day. The remaining 2% will be used for implementation and continuous improvement through research and evaluation

However, the narrative does not fully detail all funds to be used to support the implementation of the proposal.

- Narrative is confusing as to the levels of external funding. Depending on how one reads the description, there is either approximately a \$500,000 or \$2.3 million shortfall in the accounting of external sources for total revenues from all sources.

The narrative clearly outlines that grant funds would be predominately one-time investments in nature. The District Data/Tech Coach position will be phased out at the conclusion of the grant and mention is made that the Instructional Coach will take on added responsibilities at grant end. The narrative does not provide either rationale or plan for the restructuring of accountability measures and responsibilities within the organization to accommodate reductions in district-wide staffing at grant end.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the medium range as the narrative does not fully detail all funds to be used to support the implementation of the proposal.

- Narrative is confusing as to the levels of external funding. Depending on how one reads the description, there is either approximately a \$500,000 or \$2.3 million shortfall in the accounting of external sources to account for total revenues from all sources.

The narrative clearly outlines that grant funds would be predominately one-time investments in nature. The District Data/Tech Coach position will be phased out at the conclusion of the grant and mention is made that the Instructional Coach will take on added responsibilities at grant end. The narrative does not provide either rationale or plan for the restructuring of accountability measures and responsibilities within the organization to accommodate reductions in district-wide staffing at grant end.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This section was scored in the low high range as the narrative describes partnering with local agencies to realize results, resource alignment, and integration of services.

(1) The narrative provides evidence of an innovative partnership to target specific issues for special needs students. Partnership with Southwest Health Technology Foundation will allow the *ACCELERATE!* proposal to provide a neuro-feedback treatment option to students with significant brain "dysregulations" that inhibit learning in the school setting. The process allows individuals to self-correct imbalances. There is evidence that the project will train district personnel and provide the resources needed to continue implementation of the program after the grant ends. The district plans to scale up the offering of services once staff is trained and materials are available.

(2) Six desired results, divided between two population groups, are targeted to both educational results and other outcomes (behavioral). Improvements in either result area is expected to enhance learning, academic performance, and academic progress. Treatment will focus on

- "Slow" wave brain issues with the desired result being improved attention and mental function.
- "Fast" wave brain issues with the desired result being improved focus and mental function.

(3) The narrative provides sufficient evidence that the selected indicators will be tracked both in the aggregate and at the student level.

- The partnership will track selected indicators using the state's TCAP and End of Course exams.
- The partnership target resources based on the data, specifically to address needs of the SD subgroup that has shown a widening of the achievement gap, with the goal to improve achievement results for these students.

(4) The narrative provides evidence of the integration of services to address student need. The partnership will formulate protocols for referral and for the prioritization of services.

(5) The narrative provides evidence that the partnership can build the capacity of staff:

- To deliver services. Staff will be trained and supervised by Dr. E. Littlefield, program supervisor for SHTF.
- To identify and inventory needs and assets of the community. Staff will learn to assess the needs and the assets of students as aligned to district goals.
- To create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement and evaluation supports (services).
- To engage parents & families in decision-making about solution and school needs. District will work with EPIP to involve the parent community.

(6) Performance measures presented in (E)(3) are repeated to maintain project goals to equip all students so that they might achieve at desired levels and therefore meet learning targets. Research findings provided as evidence supporting the desired outcomes developed around neuro-therapy being advanced in *Peak Performance Training by SHTF*.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This reviewer deems the application as having partially met Absolute Priority 1 as evidenced in the the application submitted under the title, *ACCELERATE!*

- The *ACCELERATE!* vision shows alignment with the four core educational assurance areas as evidenced by (1) the adoption and implementation of CCSS; (2) daily use and continuous improvement of a data system measuring student growth and success that informs educators with data to improve instruction; (3) attracting and retaining effective staff; and (4) proven ability to correct deficiencies and turn around low-performing schools.
- There is a coherent and comprehensive plan to capitalize on Human Capital as identified for students, teachers, family and community. Another part of the plan focuses on Infrastructure as it relates to implementing technology and extending time to accommodate a rich menu of options outside of the contract day.
- The development of personalized learning opportunities through the shoring up of 21st century classrooms, wireless networks, and availability of electronic resources and continued rollout of the Bring-Your-Own-Devise launch in the district.
- The *ACCELERATE!* plan focuses student learning and performance on the implementation with fidelity of the personalization of learning for all students, with improved performance on summative assessments, graduation rates, and enhanced college enrollment statistics.

The *ACCELERATE!* plan does not clearly present the case for narrowing or eliminating achievement gaps in identified subgroups targeted in the proposal. The applicant's vision for the *ACCELERATE!* project delineates growth in achievement scores in general (Overall), yet projections do not show a pattern of narrowing of the achievement gap between Overall performance and the identified subgroups. See detail provided in section (A)(4).

Total	210	115
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