



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0369VA-1 for Norfolk Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is not a coherent proposal because Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) does not explain how a three part plan hangs together. They offer a broad analytical tool called Cycle for Results as the major K12 initiative but it is not clear that it will lead to personalization. Instead, the Norfolk focus, by state law, must primarily be on meeting the Virginia state standards called Standards of Learning</p> <p>A proposed career and technical high school is proposed without any reference to the specific careers it will prepare students for, despite a superb workforce projected needs document included in the appendix but not utilized to define what this new high school should provide in training. The Open Campus, the third component, serves only 11th and 12th graders who are college bound but never projects the number of students to be served. (The Open Campus budget provides for hiring eight teachers.) Later on the budget reveals that almost half the federal RT3 funds will be spent on After School Tutoring but that initiative is not mentioned in the vision. Norfolk (NPS) is a Navy town with high transient rates and later in the proposal a special military TEAM initiative is laid out, but not in this vision section. This section is far from comprehensive and does not introduce the multiple activities and services required in Norfolk. The career school and open campus concepts have potential merit, but are not scoped out in any detail.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The list of schools and numbers of students from low income families look very complete and comply with (b) and (c). The score is low because there is no description of the process used for selection as required in section (a). Many schools could be selected but there is no description, rationale, or explanation justifying treating all schools as equally deserving of assistance. This raises unanswered questions about the implementation of the plan.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response to (A)(3) is missing. There is no scaleup strategy. Without this no points are awarded.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Norfolk must and will take very seriously the State of Virginia standards which are high, and the expected 80% school graduation rates which are high. An 80% graduation rate might be easily achieved in Virginia- D.C. suburbs but will be a great challenge in a naval port with many transient students .The ambitious state goals may not be achievable in four years in Norfolk. Given the high mobility of Navy families, it will be be difficult to identify who went to college around the world. See also comments below on (d)</p> <p>Norfolk has committed to use the state quarterly student achievement reports and early warning systems to identify student learning problems. At the high school graduation coaches will work to keep students in school through graduation, which is important and comendable.</p> <p>Many Norfolk students move prior to becoming eligible for college so this (d) is a challenging criterion.</p> <p>The numerous tools and strategies, such as coaches, demonstrate a commitment to try to meet the state goals. Norfolk shows</p>		

great determination to succeed.

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	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is incomplete. The major accomplishment cited is middle school Algebra I where Norfolk asserts that 95% of the enrolled students passed. The five year trend is upward which is commendable and shows progress. Then a table broken down by ethnicity reveals that 60-80% of Algebra I students earned C grades or better. Perhaps a grade of D is passing, but the narrative does not explain this phenomenon of borderline proficiency, certainly not college-ready. Other academic subjects and skills are not discussed nor data presented.</p> <p>This section is silent on high school graduation rates. The appendix includes considerable data on improved students attendance, decreases in student suspensions, and other improvements. There is no discussion of achievement gains at low-performing schools.</p> <p>Norfolk proudly cites its inclusion among four urban "runner up" districts listed by the Broad Foundation in their competition for "the most improved city school system" but the compelling data on achievement or student retention do not appear in this section of the proposal. More data were needed to document element (c) in the proposal.</p> <p>There is no discussion of college attendance trends. Many Norfolk high school students must accompany their parents to other naval bases elsewhere in the world so that tracking college enrollments is a huge task and may not be realistic.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The teacher and instructional staff and support salaries are aggregated for each category for the entire district but are not broken down for each school level as called for in this requirement. NPS asserts that the data are available by school, and lists up to ten "excluded schools" with total salary and non-personnel expenditure data. This section is confusing and not at all clear.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The state of Virginia sets strong expectations under the label of Standards of Learning and Annual Measurable Objectives. The state sets a graduation rate target of 85%. It is not at all clear that the state allows much leeway or autonomy, given these high and explicit expectations.</p> <p>NPS argues that it was allowed to pursue grants for afterschool programs and to create a dashboard display of data, which can be argued are in full accord with high state expectations. There was no discussion of mastery learning as opposed to prescribing hours to be spent in class, or much discussion of varied personalization strategies. Later in the proposal there is the option to adopt AVID which is an individualization strategy for college preparation. There are a few initiatives that document some freedom to implement creative programs, but Norfolk on the whole must live within a highly regulated state environment.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>More than 400 educators and citizens met and agreed on nine priorities for the Norfolk public schools. A forty person team, mainly educators, prepared the report and the superintendent then created the Cycle of Results to handle the data needed to track progress.</p>		

There was no evidence of discussion or participation by a teacher membership organization.

There are seven letters of support. One letter is from the state and strongly suggests the district check with and comply with state laws. This indicates that autonomy will be limited. Another is from the sheriff who also voiced concern about a shooting near a football venue. The Greater Norfolk Corporation representing 110 employers expressed support, as did a Norfolk State University dean and an early education provider. Collectively the support was mid-level, other than for convening 400 participants in goal setting.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan is best at assigning responsibilities to a deputy superintendent and to project managers for implementation. There is limited discussion of personalized learning environments. Most of them will serve high school students and there is no personalization plan for the lower grades. The identification of needs and gaps is incomplete.

The plan involves hiring more graduation coaches to increase graduation rates, hiring lots of after school tutors to meet AMO and SOL objectives, creating a new career high school and options for able college bound students including AVID, dual enrollment in a community college, online courses and other choices. This becomes clear mainly through the budget display, not in this section which requires the description of a total plan. The plan is mainly for secondary school personalization but lacks full details on the career school and open campus components.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The strengths of this plan include the quarterly assessment of data on how each students is progressing. At the high school level graduation coaches and after school tutors will help bring students up to grade expectations. The Open Campus could be a strong option and could provide for deep learning but for 11th and 12th grade only. Career and technical students will have new options, although for which careers is not clear even as one examines the projected regional workforce needs. The career fields served in the new school are not even clear in the budget which provides for computers and pre-engineering items but no investment in health career workspaces, for example.

Under (a) there is very little discussion of cultural learning, of "communication" or deep learning. The only discussion of creativity and problem solving appears briefly in a STEM paragraph. There will also be a Virtual High School, not previously discussed, which might provide personalization. NPS is offering an academic menu, an educational smorgasbord of options, rather than a comprehensive plan. This qualifies in (b) for providing variety, but it is not clear how the graduation coaches will use the data to design a personalized program as required by this program.

In summary this section offers more than half of what was required.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The strengths of this section include use of numerous tools such as PALS to detect early reading problems and using Datacation in the later grades. Elementary teachers have access to quarterly reports on student progress. High school students have graduation coaches reviewing student progress and unmet requirements for graduation. Norfolk provides professional development opportunities two days a year and two hours each month for teachers to master the numerous data tools. Starting in 2011 Norfolk teachers are evaluated in part by results from a teacher growth assessment model. The system is using data to address the personal needs of each student. The district is committed to identifying and reducing student achievement gaps. It is not clear that teachers are involved in school leadership teams to make this happen.

Part (d) deals with hard to staff schools. Norfolk does not commit to any plan to address it although in the appendix it is clear that they track teacher retention data. There is no plan here to assign highly effective teachers and principals to low income or low performing schools. The initiatives all involve adding staff and not assigning the most effective to the neediest schools.

There is no plan here to recruit highly effective principals and assign STEM and Special Education teachers to hard to staff schools. This is a serious weakness.

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>Newport will assign a deputy superintendent, project managers, and data specialists to implement the plan.</p> <p>The district did not discuss mastery learning (c) and (d) but cites mainly the state SOL and AMO assessments for measuring progress by school or grade. These are group and grade level prescriptions. At the high school level Newport deserves points for a High School Improvement model that includes a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) and mastery opportunities that next will be implemented in middle schools. For high school students many would have access to individualization through virtual courses, early college or dual enrollment, AVID, Achieve 360 and other options. Almost all of these personalization opportunities multiply at the secondary school level and little provision for personalization is made available at the elementary school level. The plan is 50% satisfactory.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Educators have access to student achievement data each quarter or more often. They have the tools and are being trained to use them better.</p> <p>It is less clear what information and help students will have, although high school graduation coaches will tell them what they need to complete school and apply to college.</p> <p>The proposal is weakest at describing parent access to data other than the use of a tool eSemble which provides information on grades and homework completed. The district proposes use of the PTA and parent workshops without assuring that low income parents will use these opportunities. On one page there is mention of a Parent University with no discussion of how it might reach undereducated parents and tutor them effectively on how to work with the school.</p> <p>The eSemble data are strictly academic and do not include HR and budget data. External stakeholders, according to this proposal, do not have much access to public data about the schools aside from school district periodic reports.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district believes in and can implement continuous improvement strategies effectively. Virginia DOE mandates quarterly assessments as well as Annual AMO data that compel educators' attention and public discussion. The district uses Key Performance Indicators to monitor not only achievement but attendance and indicators of social and emotional problems and support. 80% of teachers surveyed reported that they found the data useful. The district uses more than a dozen measures to monitor progress at all levels, many of them tied to state SOL requirements but related to student achievement. This section was very strong.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Educators in NPS have numerous checkpoints and pupil assessment tools by which to respond to the need for revisions. The district has committed to releasing frequent public reports. Employers are supportive through their association, the Greater Norfolk Corporation. Teachers will be evaluated in part on their students' progress and achievement. Their engagement and</p>		

roles are under-reported in this proposal.

The state is an important stakeholder in providing high standards and measurements, and will pay close attention to Norfolk each year. The VDOE agency will expect and support needed revisions in the NPS plan.

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

NPS will collect data on more than 14 measures, including the state required SOL achievement data but also useful information on students attendance, suspensions, graduation rates, financial aid (FAFSA) filings and other relevant information. These data are highly relevant to monitoring persistence and graduation/college enrollment rates. Several of them project out only one year, because of unknown but expected changes in state expectations in 2013. This is credible and justifiable because it is not possible to project progress against standards not yet decided upon or promulgated. The use of one year projections is useful and illustrative.

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

This section was not included in the proposal. Other sections of the proposal describe technology and expected results but are not included here. There are no discussions of the use of teacher teams or compensation incentives or reforms.

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

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget narrative and tables are clearly presented and readable. They display other state, foundation and federal resources which might supplement the RT3 grant if funded. For example, Norfolk qualifies for Department of Defense funds because of the large naval base. Norfolk is a major Department of Defense center and important to the U.S. government.

Equipment is the most prevalent up front investment. The staffing investments are spread evenly over four years. The rationales were strong.

What was surprising was the allocation of \$16 million, almost half of the grant, to after school tutors, not previously mentioned as a centerpiece of the basic plan. The budgeted amount makes it the lead investment by a big margin.

The budget for the Career and Technical High School included very little staffing, possibly revealing insufficient planning and design time on this major component.

The budget for graduation coaches was well documented and carefully presented.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There was no high quality sustainability plan submitted at all. The plan for future support after the grant ended was not evident other than the possible availability of federal DOD funds mentioned in (F) (1).

#### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The major partnership proposed was with the Norfolk Education Foundation which raises funds for school grants and for

teacher development. One of the successes has been the Norfolk Board Academy which helped 53 Norfolk teachers prepare for and earn national "master" teacher certification. There was no stated plan to expand this potentially useful program. The Foundation has made small grants to three elementary schools for a school garden, a greenhouse, and "book publishing house". However laudable these grants were, there is no proposal to recruit other community agencies to address the core purposes of the plan. The teacher development initiative qualifies as worthy but at the low range of the scale absent a plan to assign master teachers to the neediest schools or otherwise implement the plan. Other services mentioned such as AVID might require a university partner but none was mentioned as a strategy for college bound students. Also AVID was part of the core proposal rather than in this supplemental plan.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Norfolk is clearly committed to raising achievement scores and decreasing achievement gaps, using data for decisions, preparing students for college and careers, evaluating educator effectiveness and expanding personalized education, although more for secondary school students. The plan does not expand access to highly effective educators very aggressively but there is a commitment to serve all students well.

Total	210	110
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### Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

No supplemental budget was submitted.



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0369VA-2 for Norfolk Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's vision is focused on the use of "Cycle for Results" (including Learning Walks and Safety Nets) and the development and implementation of a Career & Technical High School and an Open Campus. It is helpful that the district's Comp. Accountability System provides Key Performance Indicators for each school; it is less helpful that there have been five different district leaders in the past ten years.

Using Pearson's on-line SchoolNet, educators can access disaggregated data and monitor student growth/achievement; parents can also keep track of their children's progress -- although this assumes electronic devices and/or computers and reliable internet access, tools that may not be available to the high numbers of low income families. Also, it would be helpful if the applicant had expressly indicated how this access will directly contribute to an increased personalized learning environment.

Strategic planning has involved input from 400+ internal and external stakeholders, with a broad-based team of forty developing and up-dating the district's missions, beliefs, and project priorities. The 2012-2013 District Priorities Report, presented by the Superintendent, includes Priority Two: To increase academic achievement of all students -- to raise the floor & ceiling simultaneously to close achievement gaps.

NPS has set the ambitious goal of a 90%+ Absolute Target for students. Overall it appears that the applicant has lofty goals for all students, although it is not clear how equity will be increased and how achievement for the 21,500 identified high needs students will be accelerated.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The tables provided show the demographics of participating schools based on the number and percentage of students from low income families in these targeted schools. It makes sense for 100% of the students in schools to participate when the percentage of students from low income families is particularly high (80 - 100%), but it makes less sense when the percentage is in the middle range of 44 - 55%. The latter mid-range schools include Maury High, Granby High, Norview High, Tarralton Elem., and Rosemont Middle. There is no information provided about the basis for identifying those who are 'high need' students beyond the criteria of coming from low income families. There is no evidence of a narrative describing the process for selecting schools to participate.

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

(A) (3) There is no response to A3 in the submitted materials. However in the applicant's A1 response there is reference to using the Cycle for Results framework to analyze student data to determine how to accelerate and/or remediate based on individual student's needs. The applicant notes that the district intends to use the results to then create to a "stronger educational foundation" for all students. The district does not articulate a specific theory of change. It does anticipate that the use of the Cycle for Results and the implementation of its current five year strategic plan as well as the development/implementation of both a Career and Technical High School and an Open Campus plan will enable more students to be college &/or career ready. However the district's Strategic Plan a) is not directly connected to school reform efforts as delineated in this application; and b) is not a high quality plan in the sense that it lacks the specifics of "who will do what" (persons responsible), a list of deliverables, etc.

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

(A) (4) The tables in this section are incomplete. Although baseline data is provided for SY2010-11 and SY2011-12, there are no specific numbers inserted for SY 2012-2013 through SY 2016-17 in most of the charts. When there is data added, it is a list of state AMO benchmarks rather than district targets. There is a statement superimposed on tables with blank cells referring to the state expectations for annual improvement &/or a % goal; however there is no evidence of a specific year for these state targets. Without a designated target year, the prescribed VDOE percentages are meaningless.

When there is data inserted in cells for upcoming years, the state AMO target benchmarks used do not seem to relate to local data for the baseline years. For instance, for Math (a composite of information for grades 3-8, Algebra I & II, & Geometry), the information is confusing. Four groups have percentages that are projected as declining from SY2010-11 to SY2016-17. For example Asian students are expected to decline from 90.9% to the universal ending percentage in SY2016-17 of 73%; White students are similarly projected to decline from 88% to 73%.

"Gap group1" is undefined as to what two groups are being compared. There is no explanation for the basis for the percentages in each cell although it appears these are probably the 'pass rate.' It is also not clear why students generally improved from SY2010-11 to SY11-12 in Reading at grades 3-8 & 11 with revised AMOs and SOL tests, but these same groups had their scores decline by as much as 27 % points in Math when they took newly revised state math tests in SY 2011-12.

The percentages in the Science Table appear completely arbitrary. While students in the various subgroups had varying

scores in SY 2011-12 with Asian and White students at 93% and 94% respectively and others with percentages as low as 58% for Students with Disabilities, the targets for ALL subgroups for the years SY2012-13 to SY 2016-17 is 70%. There is a similar table for History.

It is confusing to understand the tables for Gap Data in Reading and Math for grades 3-8 & 11 with percentages inserted for rows described as "Gap Group 2 & White," "Gap Group 3 & White," and "Gap Group 2 & Gap Group 3," yet there is no information provided as to what group or groups of students constitute Gap Groups 2 and 3.

The table for Graduation rates is also confusing since the numbers (presumably %) are listed in bold as the "Federal Graduation Rate." Thus it is not clear whether these figures are national or district percentages of those graduating. Whatever the reference, the percentages do not seem to correlate to the data in previous tables within this section. For instance, this A4c table shows that 85 (%?) of students with disabilities graduated in SY 2011-12, but only 33 (%?) of Asians and Hispanics. The superimposed message over blank cells in the table on Graduation Rates notes that "The goal of 85% for all subgroups as prescribed by VDOE will be used," but again there is no target year for that goal.

The gender-based college enrollment tables indicate that only 148 white males and 193 white females enrolled in a two or four year IHE in SY 2011-12. It seems unlikely that a total of 341 White students and only 790 Black students out of 30,078 participating students enrolled in college last year -- or if these figures are accurate, there is considerable concern that the goal of a 5% increase for all subgroups (target year unknown) is very low and if for SY 2016-17 it is far from ambitious.

There is no evidence of a narrative.

Given the confusing and missing data, it is impossible to be confident that the applicant has ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are likely to result in improved student learning/performance and increased equity.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

### (B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the application provides information about the Norfolk Public School's record in the past four years. The applicant notes its interest in exploring how its high schools might be reformed, including the establishment of specialty programs, themed high schools, and 9th grade academies -- and the goal of developing a new career and technical high school.

While not cited in the B1 response, Appendix C, the NPS Achievable Results Report 2012-12 Update, does provide more specific information regarding student attendance, academics, student behavior, etc. However the data is uneven regarding improvement. For instance App. C, Table 5, D2-1, Reading on Grade Level, appears to show a decline in scores at almost all grade levels from SY2005-06 to SY2011-12. In that same period, Table 7 D2-3, Promotion, shows an increase in the percentage of students who advance a grade a year. However, this data is not shown as disaggregated by subgroup (or school) so it is not possible to know if significant gaps remained in lower performing subgroups. Three graphs in that section of the Appendix are not labeled. The subsequent Appendix C report shows numerous graphs, but the data is only specified by the entire district's grade levels, not by subgroups.

The narrative and graphs in B1 focus on improvements in the percentage of students taking and passing Algebra I in the middle schools. There are positive indicators of improvement in this realm; however, B1 does not address progress (or lack of progress) in other academic areas. The percentage of middle school students successfully completing Algebra I (a marker for students likely to successfully taking high school math courses and continuing on to college) has increased significantly, although it is a concern that this percentage includes students who passed with a 'D.'

In the past four years, the percentage of middle school students with at least a C in Algebra I indicates that generally Asian and White students do the best, while a much lower percentage of African American students passed (about 44%). The percentage of all middle school Algebra I subgroups's pass rates of C or above fell significantly between SY2010-11 and SY2011-12. With more students completing Algebra I at middle school than high school, there are increased enrollments in more advanced math courses in the high schools, a promising change.

Overall, it is difficult to establish the applicant's record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching due to much of the data failing to be disaggregated, and the lack of evident progress outside of the increase of middle school students taking and passing Algebra I. The B1 response does cite Appendix

D, the district's plan to create a Career and Technical High School; the plan appears to be in very early stages of development as the planning group (as of its 9/15/12 report) is still exploring site acreage, policy implications, etc. It is also not clear if the intention is to create one Career/Technical High School or two different schools: an Academic Career High School and a Technical High School (as p. 9 of this report refers to "both programs" [schools]).

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

5

1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response provides "actual personnel salaries" at the school level for teacher, instructional staff as well as non-personnel expenditures with ten named schools excluded (no rationale is provided for these exclusions, &/or why they are separately listed). However other than the excluded schools, the salaries and expenditures are district-wide which would be for a total of approx. forty-two schools. Without school level actual salaries and expenditures, the applicant does not demonstrate evidence for transparency in its processes, practices, and investments. In addition, there is no information about how even the aggregated data is made available to the public.

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

10

2

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although the applicant cites various state funded grants, it is unclear how its description of a needs assessment survey regarding middle school after school academic programs relates to this section's request for information about the state context for implementation. The survey did apparently lead to after school programming, but there is no information about the demographic break-down of students in different sub-groups who attended (by numbers and/or percentage), their attendance/participation rate, or their SOL gains as a result of involvement with the after-school program. Overall, this part of the response does not seem relevant to the state context for implementation of district reforms to improve personalized learning environments.

The applicant notes that it has received \$11 million in [federal] SIG grants, and notes the district's leadership team meets monthly. It states that this team reviews school level improvement indicators and plans for rapid improvement at each school. In addition, this team reviews policies and procedures allowing schools flexibility for alternative structures. There is interesting district-level information, but again this does not appear to be relevant to the indicator B3 regarding the state context for implementation.

Virginia Dashboard technology is utilized by Graduation Coaches as a web-based data analysis and reporting tool that helps monitor student achievement, attendance and discipline data as well as formative benchmark assessments. This tool may be provided by the state to aid local SIG schools, but it is not an example of the state's 'legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements.'

Overall, this section does not respond to the request for evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments.

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

10

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant notes that over 400 people from many different internal and external stakeholder groups were involved in forums that generated input for developing the district's five year strategic plan. (Note: In Section A, Vision, this Strategic Plan is cited as found in Appendix A, but that Appendix only contains a 2012-13 report on school board/ district short term priorities). 400 participants in forums is an impressive number but a very small percentage of the district's 235,000 residents. The district's Strategic Planning Team of 40 members then utilized feedback from the larger group to develop the district's beliefs and goals.

The Superintendent met with the district's staff to share data and inform the staff that the Cycle for Results model would be used in all schools. It is not clear the extent that students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools were engaged in the actual development of the Superintendent's plan or of the overall RTT-D proposal. For instance there is a lack of evidence about the extent of the teachers' support of the report's daily implementation of prescribed instruction and curriculum (under the report's Priorities 1 & 2, 1.1), mandatory completion of pre-assessment logs, quarterly formal teacher observation reports (Priority 1, 1.4), and mandatory expectations for principals/ assistant principals to monitor classroom instruction on a daily basis (Priority 2, 1.5).

SchoolNet data portal gives teachers and administrators access to student performance, but there is no indication how extensively this is accessed and used in meaningful ways, nor is there information about how its use impacts improved teaching/learning. Perhaps of greater importance to this B4 section, there is no information about parental access to their children's attendance, grades, assignments, although this is usually a part of the SchoolNet offerings.

It is somewhat confusing that the Superintendent's 2012-13 report in Appendix A is presented as the same as a longer term Strategic Plan, when it is not, and that it is aligned with the RTT-D proposal -- whereas this report includes other Priorities/Goals such as ensuring that all schools are fully accredited, improving safety and marketing, improving facilities, etc.

There is little documentation of broad-based community support for the RTT-D proposal. Although not cited, at the very end of the appendices there are letters of support for the RTT-D proposal from the city's Mayor and the Executive Vice President of the Greater Norfolk Corporation. There is another letter supporting a city initiative, Norfolk Ready by 5, from the city's Early Childhood Programs Coordinator, and a letter from the city's Sheriff/High Constable expressing a commitment to safe and secure school environments for students, teachers, and visitors. There is also a copy of an email from an administrator at Norfolk State University describing the IHE's own proposal for enhancing the training of teachers in mathematics.

Overall, there is limited evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development and support of this RTT-D proposal.

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

The applicant describes prior receipt of almost \$12 million in federal grants to support Smaller Learning Communities which involved over 5,000 students. However there is a lack of evidence regarding how these funds have impacted performance measures such as the reduction in the high school dropout rate or an increase in academic achievement and social growth among high needs students or students by sub-group. That disaggregation is key to identifying and tracking targeted 'needs and gaps' in implementing personalized learning environments.

While the applicant contends that it successfully manages over \$25 million in grant funding based on identifying needs and gaps, there is no information provided about any recent analysis that would serve as a basis for RTT-D funded projects. Again, it is helpful that the district employs (an unspecified number) of School Counselors, elementary level Parent Liaisons, and secondary Attendance Technicians. However there is no data provided on the impact of these positions on student growth or the extent to which they're placed in high needs schools to work with high needs students.

There is very limited evidence, beyond the demographic profile of between 22,000 and 23,000 students from low income families, to document specific identified needs and gaps that justify the applicant's RTT-D proposed projects that are outlined in the budget section.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this section the applicant describes its plans to create a new career and technical high school and an open campus program. The specifics of these initiatives are still being developed. The new high school's goal is to improve personalization by increasing opportunities for more students to be career ready in high demand fields, strengthening their academic and tech. skills, their work ethic, and their motivation to graduate. In Appendix E there is a 2012 report from Opportunity Inc., 'Driving Hampton Roads Competitiveness: Meeting the Demand for a Skilled Workforce,' that notes the need for more job-ready high school graduates in the fields of healthcare, construction trades, and industrial technicians. Such needs, it states, could be addressed through new or existing technical high schools. However this study is not based on just the needs of Norfolk; instead it covers the entire Hampton Roads area that includes six counties and ten cities (not just Norfolk), so it is somewhat difficult to know if the Opportunity report reflects the specific needs of Norfolk itself.

The planned Open Campus program is a "middle college" that allows students 16 years and older to take a combination of high school and college courses. Students would be dual enrolled in a high school and a community college so they would have more flexibility in course options and more chances to explore individual interests. Both the career & technical high school and the open campus plans provide evidence that an unspecified number of students would have additional opportunities to be career &/or college ready. However, there is no evidence that these options would particularly benefit students in subgroups that are presently experiencing higher drop out rates, higher risk behaviors &/or lower rates of

achievement.

This section also contains descriptions of a variety of district initiatives, programs and tools presently in place regarding early literacy, individual academic and career planning, monitoring of student progress, arts integration, STEM, PLCs, PD360, entrepreneurship, AVID, data tools, tiered support through PBIS, Achieve 3000, dual enrollment, and virtual learning. While these are rich in potential, It is not clear to what extent teachers, students, and parents (where appropriate) access these resources or how they are woven together/ interrelated & integrated. Although all these programs and tools are certainly valuable, it would have been helpful to know how many students, especially high needs students, are involved in each one and any available information about their individual and collective impact on creating more personalized learning environments.

There is also a lack of information about the initiatives' specific accommodations and high quality strategies for high needs students to help ensure they're on track toward meeting college and career ready standards and graduation requirements. This is of particular concern as The College Board report in Appendix H notes that of the students graduating from the district's high schools in June, 2011, 79% had expressed expectations for postsecondary education, yet only 13.4% met college readiness benchmarks.

Overall, this section describes numerous initiatives in place that have the potential to offer all students opportunities for improved performance levels and greater college and career readiness. However there is little to no evidence that these -- or the proposed RTT-D career/technical high school and open campus programs -- will specifically support high needs students' access to tools and resources that will help them track and manage their learning and as such help prepare them to be significantly more ready for college &/or careers.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In this section the applicant describes the district's various assessments and goals, Pre-K through high school. Some of these are traditional goals, such as "Reading on grade level by the end of third grade," providing internships/community volunteering opportunities, and implementing new GED programs. Others appear to address the needs of more advanced students already on track for college, such as providing the means for students to earn IB &/or advanced studies diplomas -- and reviewing the gifted identification process. Although welcomed, there is no evidence provided that such efforts have been successful in improving instructional &/or leadership effectiveness, or have improved the schools' capacity to more effectively prepare high needs students, for college and careers.

The district offers a range delivery models and scheduling opportunities and topics for professional learning; these have the potential to help teachers, school leaders and leadership teams to structure more individualized learning environments in their schools. It would be helpful to know how many educators participate or the impact of this learning on all students, especially high needs students. Although no specifics are provided, the applicant notes that (undefined) "hard-to-staff" schools are provided additional (but unspecified) resources for professional development, technology, and support staff.

Rigorous and frequent teacher evaluations are mandated by the state and the Superintendent's plan outlines further mandates time-lines and the required focus of principals' evaluations. These have the potential to provide helpful instructional feedback and coaching for teachers although such evaluations don't necessarily lead to highly effective teaching. That is, there is no evidence provided that daily monitoring and quarterly evaluations along with professional development events, school climate surveys, and high school graduation coaches have or will improve student performance and close achievement gaps.

The district's programs such as PBIS, Achieve300, My Vantage: My Access, and distant learning/ online learning can be very helpful for creating more respectful school environments and additional resources for students, but this is hard to judge from the proposal regarding participation rates (and impact) by subgroups &/or schools.

Overall, the district has goals and activities relevant to the aims of RTT-D, but this section lacks evidence of the extent to which teachers are actually using the tools, data, resources, and instructional strategies/ assessments to accelerate student progress towards college/career readiness.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that its Central Office is organized to provide support and services to district's schools. Continuous High School Improvement (CHSI) expanded (by an unspecified amount) Personalized Education Plans for targeted students, dual enrollment opportunities, community based and on-line distant learning programs. The approach was then applied to the creation of the Middle School Quality Education Plan. Students and parents have potential access to eSembler that provides relevant information about grades and homework. There is no evidence of the extent of parents regularly accessing eSembler or the various other online portals. The 22,500 identified disadvantaged students and their low income families may or may not have electronic devices and reliable internet service so that they can access on-line student performance data, teacher e-mails, or the district website.</p> <p>This section includes excerpts from the 2012-2013 Board /Division Priorities Report (found in Appendix A) that describe the goals, action steps, measurements and targets for various goals such as increasing the unspecified percentage of all students and those in subgroups scoring 70% or above on teacher-made assessments, and the mandates of literacy program elements/programs and pre-assessment documentation.</p> <p>At the end of this section, the applicant cites this report as the plan "for the current year to address student achievement," when it actually is the School Board's plan to address an array of issues, from accreditation to facility improvements. Its subsections that relate to student achievement have general goals rather than specific ones that relate to high needs students/ low performing schools or developing opportunities to demonstrate mastery whenever and wherever.</p> <p>The practices in this section all appear to be related to middle schools and high schools, when previous statements describe the project as including 100% of the students in the listed elementary schools. Also there is no evidence of present work towards ensuring learning resources are adaptable and fully accessible to students with disabilities and English learners.</p> <p>Although there are examples of relevant activities, there does not appear to be a strong overall high quality comprehensive district-wide plan regarding policies and practices &amp;/or infrastructure to provide all students and educators the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no evidence of a separate response to D2. However, it appears that the applicant may have combined the responses for D1 &amp; D2 in one response. If so, there is very limited evidence of district-wide policies and infrastructure to support personalized learning with the support and resources for whenever/wherever learning. This is a particular concern since the applicant states that there are over 23,000 students from low income families -- and many of those students and families may not have electronic access to the on-line eSembler and/or other opportunities for at-home on-line information and learning.</p> <p>There is no information provided about open data formats and interoperable data systems.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no evidence of a separate response to address E1. There is a description in the general section E response of present practices, including "quarterlies," Tests for Higher Standards that are given to students every nine weeks to provide formative data that could be used to improve instruction. These have been in use for twelve years and do not appear to be particularly relevant to the RTT-D plan and the need to collect data as the basis for on-going improvement of grant-funded activities. Similarly there is a description of a teacher survey (no date provided for when this took place) regarding the utility of formative assessments, and a description of how feedback to teachers is "turned in to" an individualized improvement plan, but again these do not connect to any plan for monitoring and measuring the quality of proposed RTT-D projects. In addition,</p>		

there is no mention of a plan for publicly sharing information about the progress toward RTT-D project goals or how the district might utilize monitoring data to implement improvements during and after the term of the grant.

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

5

0

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is no evidence of a separate response to E2.

There is no evidence of an overall plan to engage internal or external stakeholders in on-going communication about the proposed RTT-D projects. There is a letter of support for the creation of a full-time career and technical high school from the Executive Vice President of the Greater Norfolk Corporation, an organization of over one hundred CEOs from local businesses and colleges/universities. However there is no indication that the GNC or its members will be kept informed about the project or invited to provide feedback during the implementation of the RTT-D projects, or that if feedback is offered that it would be incorporated into any kind of 'course corrections' or improvements of the proposed C.&T. high school. There is also no evidence of a plan to engage internal stakeholders; the lack of a 'communication and engagement plan' regarding teachers is of particular concern.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There is no evidence of a response for E3 in the sequence expected. However, tables for performance measures are provided later in the application. For the most part the cells in the tables are not filled in. For the first three tables there is a superimposed message regarding the VA DOE's Student Growth Model and reference to local benchmark, portfolios & authentic assessments (although there is an absence of specific #'s or % for these). Other superimposed messages on top of blank cells refer to the applicant's goal of increasing students' achievement to meet/exceed the VA AMO targets/benchmarks, or a general % percentage goal for all students.

Overall, the tables do not provide specific #'s and percentages of participating students in each grade level band by subgroup in the various performance measures included. In addition, there is a lack of information about how these measures would provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information related to the proposed RTT-D projects or how the district would review and improve such measures if they are insufficient go inform stakeholders about the progress of the projects' implementation.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that "In some cases, we have been data rich and information poor causing a gap in student achievement." The "cases" are unspecified and the statement reflects an absence of understanding of the complex nature and non-data related causes for gaps in student achievement.

This section describes the Cycle for Results, quarterly testing (started in 2000) and a teacher survey regarding district benchmark assessments, neither of which appear to be directly relevant to evaluating future projects implemented with RTT-D funding. The district tool "SchoolNet" is more relevant as the applicant states that it will be a warehouse for collecting data on student achievement, P.D., goal-oriented lesson planning, etc.

There are teacher and administrator training sessions scheduled for the current year on Learning Walks, instructional leadership and formative assessments; parent workshops are scheduled to explain how students are being assessed and ways to provide home support for their children. These are positive steps for overall capacity building, but lack an explicit connection regarding how the district will evaluate the RTT-D funded activities.

Overall, there is a lack of evidence of a comprehensive overall plan to evaluate the effectiveness of potential RTT-D projects and activities in order to adjust and revise programs and investments as needed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is a clear explanation of state grant funding to support the Safety Net after-school tutorial program for students who are experiencing academic difficulty, though there is no information about the specific number of students, their membership in one or more subgroups or the percentage of the 21,508 high needs students who are or will be served.

Other state funds will be used to support summer enrichment & remediation programs and to purchase instructional software including computers and printers. There is an overview provided of local funding which will purchase software and various instructional and tracking software along with purchasing TV monitors for each classroom (rather old technology compared to today's LCD projectors used with full size screens). Federal VocEd and DOD funds also support the applicant's RTT-D projects.

The budget appears to be reasonable and sufficient to implement the following RTT-D project components (with zero funds from other sources): to extend the contract through the summer of 5 graduation coaches and to hire 8 new ones at the middle school level; implement Extended Day Safety Net & Enrichment programming at 47 school sites; one time funds to fund labs at four theme-based academies; computers & elec. support for five labs; AVID; Project Manager;

The budget appears to be less than sufficient to implement The Open Campus Program due to underfunding of 8 teachers (\$101,400. divided by 8 = \$12,675./year, an insufficient amount for a cert. teacher's annual salary); zero funds are noted from other sources.

Budget subpart 3, Project level budget summaries, is blank.

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

The anticipated opening of the Career and Technical High School in Sept. 2014 and the investment in an Open Campus program, professional development, and academies supported with RTT-D funds could be long-lasting and potentially sustainable with other local, state, and federal funds.

The applicant describes various sources of federal funding that are likely to continue past the RTT-D funding, including Carl Perkins funds, DD MCASP grants, and ODE TEAMS funding. State funding that may continue post-grant include financial support for technology and less RTT-D relevant funding for summer enrichment/remediation programs. The Carl Perkins funding and state grants for technology appear to be the most relevant to the RTT-D projects.

There is some evidence of on-going support from various sources beyond RTT-D funding, but there is a lack of a high quality comprehensive and specific budget plan for post-grant sustainability. For instance the table labeled "Project Timeline and Responsibilities" only goes through Year 4 of the RTT-D funding, and most of the cells for years two through four just list "Ongoing" even when this does not make sense, e.g., row one lists the task to "Advertise, interview and hire Project Manager" as Ongoing through years 2 to 4.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority:

The applicant describes a strong partnership with the Norfolk Education Foundation that represents area business and community leaders; this relationship was initiated in the spring of 2012 as A+ Community Partners. The NEF sponsors a mini-grant program for new &/or innovative projects at local schools including support for local teachers to complete National Board Certification as Master Teachers.

The performance measures data is only provided for SY2011-12. For instance this table shows that 23.4% of high school students are "chronically absent" yet there are no targets for decreasing the percentage of high school students in this category for SY 2012-13 through SY 2016-17.

The competitive Preference Priority appears to request funding for the same goals and programs described in the primary RTT-D grant application. There is a letter of support at the end of the appendices from the Executive V.-P. of the Greater

Norfolk Corporation, a consortium of local business, organization and high education leaders, that expresses support for the overall application but particularly the creation of a career and technical high school.

There is no evidence of any specific annual goals for the performance measures for the Competitive Priority, no letter of support from the NEF partner, and a lack of evidence for responses to the criteria in sub-sections 2, 3 (a - d), 4, 5 (a - e), or 6.

Overall, the applicant's partnership with the Norfolk Education Foundation is rich with potential for supporting students; the concern is that there are few details offered on exactly how these additional funds would augment, track outcomes, scale up, or build upon previous efforts to support participating students and their families.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Absolute Priority 1 is not met by this applicant because although there are examples of promising practices and an array of potential projects and programs to be funded with RTT-D funds, there is a lack of an overall coherent and comprehensive plan to build on the core educational assurance areas. Often the proposal is lacking in important details about the present and projected benefit of various activities regarding improving teacher effectiveness and accelerating student learning and college/career readiness. The budgeted investments are attractive in themselves, but there is a lack of solid rationales for selecting these options and a lack of a coherent and compelling overall plan for how the budgets for these elements will create personalized learning environments that will decrease achievement gaps and accelerate the learning of low/lowest performing students and schools.

Total	210	74
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0369VA-3 for Norfolk Public Schools

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

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There evidence presented by the applicant indicates that there is a comprehensive vision the proposed project. The program is the result of a needs assessment and 5 year district wide strategic plan. The outcomes from the plan resulted in the development of seven priorities which are aligned with and will address the four core educational reform areas of the Race To The Top program. The applicants approach is reasonable and logical to the support the needs of the students to be served by the project. For example, the applicant proposes to create a Career and Technical High School which will provide rigorous academic, career and technical studies. Additionally, an open campus program will be developed for students who wish to accelerate their studies and graduate. The approach is reasonable and will support student achievement because the process is based upon the Cycle of Results components outlined in the districts strategic plan. The Cycle of Result is a guideline for use with the state standards and components of the cycle include: collect and analyze multiple data sources and align to

standards, plan and deliver standards based instructions, conduct balanced formative assessments aligned to standards, utilize/analyze formative assessments data to monitor progress, adjust institution /align intervention/achievement and assess for mastery cycle. The process focuses on the individual needs of students to determine how to accelerate and/or remediate services based upon their needs. The use of an recent upgraded data based system will allow access to student records and supports decision making at the school and district levels. The implementation of this process will ensure there will be an accountability system in place to ensure program goals are met.

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

The applicant has chosen the schools who will participate in the project based upon the needs of the targeted population that include: lack of educational resources, high poverty level and low academic achievement. The project will serve 2,560 educators and 30, 708 students. The applicant provides extensive information regarding the demographics of the targeted area such as the median income and the ethnic breakdown of the population. More specifically, the target area is located near a navel base which presents a challenge for school data collection and student achievement due to the lack of stability for families who experience frequent deployment. The applicant has successfully identified all of the schools who will participate in the program via a list. The list has provided details regarding the breakdown of the population as related to the number/percentage to be served, income, high needs and percentage educators involved with the project. The program will serve 23,119 low income and 21,508 high needs students and meets eligibility requirements of the Race To The Top grant application.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The program is the result of the districts' strategic plan developed based upon a needs assessment conducted with the help of administrators, teachers, students, businesses, colleges and other community members. Seven priorities for school improvements are defined in detail and include goals, action steps, measurements baseline data, target and absolute target. The priorities are aligned with the applicant's program goals and the four core educational focus areas of the Race To The Top grant. For example, Priority #2 of the plan is designed to increase academic achievement of all students, the baseline data presented is 79% and the target is to increase the achievement rate to 100%, the action plan and measurements are also included. The plan is designed to allow students to succeed through the use of individualized plans and programs. Weakness: Although, the applicant's program will provide change within the targeted schools, the applicant does not describe how the reform process will support change beyond the participating schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strength-The applicant presents reasonable information indicating that the project will support student learning and performance. The applicant does an excellent job demonstrating that there are ample systems in place that will effectively provide summative assessments for the project. Benchmarks of improvement for the district and schools will focus on on-time graduation, full accreditation and a climate of support. It is evident there are reasonable supports in place to ensure tracking of student progress. The district has upgraded their data systems and support will be provided through a data warehouse and online clearinghouse school. The data collection process will include evaluation of curriculum management, teacher quality, parental involvement and provide support for student personalized instruction. This tracking process will monitor program progress and provide consistent feedback regarding the program. Furthermore, the system will allow educators to personalize their own performance improvement plans and create professional development opportunities. This approach will also prove effective in the applicants efforts to improve teacher quality to ensure improved student learning and performance. Weakness-The applicant does not provide any 2012-2016 benchmarks for students attending Grade 3-11 in the areas of achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment because the district is revising the process and benchmarks have not been defined.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The information provided by the applicant clearly indicates that the district has had success in advancing the overall student learning experience and student achievement. Strategies presented were innovative and resulted in academic achievement amongst the targeted population. In order to reduce the achievement gap, several programs were implemented and there was overall improvement in student achievement across ethnic groups. The goal was to increase the number of students enrolled in AP and IB courses by offering opportunities for additional academic support and tracking student progress. Additionally, the establishment of a collaboration with the local technical college enabled juniors and seniors to take upper level classes to enhance career opportunities and educational experiences. Furthermore, the applicant reports that all middle schoolers are close to and/or have exceeded their benchmark goals for Algebra I. The applicant as provided adequate information to ensure student performance data will be made available for parents, educators and administrators. The state wide website, school and local website will be made available, in addition to face to face conferences and other electronic and written communications.

Weakness- a) The applicant does not provide any information regarding closing the achievement gap within the targeted area. b) The applicant does not specifically address the significant reform efforts over the last four years for low achieving schools.

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

- a) The applicant provides the actual salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff associated with the project.
- b) The applicant provides the actual salaries of the school-level teachers associated with the project.
- c) The applicant provides the actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

Weakness- Although the applicant provides the minimal information for this section of the proposal, there is no information provided to indicate if the salaries are made available to the public. Therefore it is not clear is there is a high level of transparency demonstrated by the LEA.

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

The applicant is capable of implementing the personalized learning environments in accordance with the states strategic plan and four core educational reform outlined by the Race To The Top grant. The model the applicant proposes to use is mirrored after a State model program created to provide academic assistance to students during school hours. The State model was the result of a needs assessment conducted and resulted in the initiative being implemented throughout the state. The applicant has demonstrated successful programming and sufficient autonomy as related to the State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. The applicant has designed programs to assist youth to achieve academic success, provided support to low performing schools and has created support systems that are aligned with program goals.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The process described indicates meaningful engagement with all stakeholders to gain input for the creation of the proposal was successful by the applicant. The project is the result of a 5-year strategic plan developed as a result of community forums attended by community leaders, school personnel, students, parents, business and city leaders. The applicant was successful in gaining information from focus groups formed by forum attendees as specific educational strategies were addressed. The applicants process was effective and as a result a senior leadership team was formed and the feedback was used to create

the district's strategic plan.

Weakness: Despite the support from community stakeholders, the applicant does not provide any letters of support from parents/parent organizations or schools where the project will be implemented.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified the need for the project based upon a four year assessment of programs offered within the school district. The needs include: providing services for students outside of the traditional classroom setting, actively engaging low performing students in classwork and engaging parents and community partners to help students achieve academically. Based upon the information provided it is clear the applicant has had success with implementing personalized plans in the targeted area. For example, the applicant restructured its high school and middle school programs based upon the comprehensive high school reform initiative and an SLC grant. Specialty programs were offered at the middle school and scheduling allowed teachers to get to know their students. Stakeholders were active in the process through input from parents and educators who help students create their individual plan. Counselors met students in small groups to complete career inventories and chart out a course of study all the way through high school. The process has resulted over 5,000 students participated in SLC programs which resulted in a reduction in the high school drop out rate, disciplinary infractions and law violations.

Weakness- The applicant indicates there is a need for technology, however there is no further information provided to access what is needed to support the program.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) Success strategies have been implemented so that students can become college and career ready. So that students are able to understand the college ready standards the PSAT test are made available to tenth graders who take the test and results are analyzed and share with the student so that they will understand their strengths and weaknesses. This process also allows for adjustments in individual plans and ensure students are on track. There are adequate plans in place to allow educators to host family sessions on how to use an online tutorial service for additional support. Curriculum support is offered to monitor college and career ready standards. Counselors monitor Pacing Guides by grade level; the guide is a college and career connections program created with stakeholders and business leaders. The guide provides the students the opportunity to connect goals to real life world applications and work closely with the community. Students exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and gain deeper learning experiences is demonstrated through the Culturally Responsive Behavior Interventions program, which focuses on culturally responsive practices to ensure all groups are benefiting from instructional and classroom management practices. STEM educational classes will be offered to allow opportunities for critical thinking and innovative applications.

b) The plan to allow students to create their own individualized learning plan is feasible and outlined by the applicant. Students attend career exploration fairs and began to create their plan beginning in the 7th grade through high school and meetings are hosted annually to review and adjust the plan as needed. Parental involvement is consistent throughout the decision making process of courses and program design, this will ensure that they are actively involved and can offer continual support. A comprehensive plan to provide a variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments is provided and will support program goals. Courses include entrepreneurship and dual enrollment courses which will accelerate the learning process. Furthermore, the district will have access to student records and develop capstone courses for seniors, and career and technical training from the technical college will be made accessible. The core curriculum will be taught by high school teachers while college courses will be taken at the community college. Differentiated technology programs will allow for online instruction which will be used to improve reading skills. Student progress can be monitored by teachers and administrators through the state's virtual website which will offer rigorous coursework and Advanced Placement courses students can access through computers made available during the school day. Parents and educators will have access to student records and will be able to monitor progress. The use of data systems will allow for the collection of formative data to be analyzed and used to meet the needs of the student and ensure they are on track. c) Students will be trained how to access the online PSAT training and the state virtual technology program so that they can explore colleges and careers. The majority of the students to be served by the project are high needs students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Educators will provide support to students through curriculum instruction and monitor student progress through a variety of services to be offered. The use of student data collected through collaborations with the local community college to provide placement tests for students will provide the opportunity for them to enroll in dual credit classes to accelerate the learning process. Additionally, the information will be used to create capstone courses to ensure students meet career and college ready performance measures. The use of "graduation coaches" is innovative and is used as a drop out prevention program located at each high school. The coaches work with students, their families and community to ensure students are on track to graduate. The applicant provides sufficient information to show that there are mechanisms in place to improve teacher and principal effectiveness through feedback to support students. The plan includes the monitoring of teacher and principal performance based upon the district standards. Annual evaluations for all teachers and principals, central office and superintendent which will measure 40% for student growth. The process is effective in that the data will be shared with relevant administrators and teacher and principal associations will work together to provide a model of transparency and improvement. The Virginia College and Career Readiness Initiative is designed to ensure college and career ready learning standards in reading, writing and math. Teachers and educators have access to online resources that include virtual Virginia which offer AP classes and College board online PSAT training to students. Additionally, academic and career plans are created for students beginning in the 7th grade in collaboration with parents and reviewed annually to make changes as needed. Professional development will be held district wide for two days and additional training will be held via workshops during after school hours and on Saturdays and online. Additional support will be offered through the teacher organization and central office. Hard to staff schools are provided additional resources for professional development, technology and support staff. Climate surveys from teachers, parents and staff to ensure teacher retention.</p> <p>Weakness- The applicant does not provide any detailed information regarding the adaptation of content and instruction to provide optimal learning approaches i.e. collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio and manipulatives. The applicant does not provide any information regarding the process to place staff who work with special education students or teach math and sciences in hard to staff schools.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan the applicant provided is comprehensive and includes all stakeholders who support the project. The central office provides support and services to the district sites which includes monitoring student progress, providing program, student assessments and professional development for staff. Additionally, the central office is a part of a five year strategic planning group that developed assessments to be used district wide to ensure program goals are met. Support from leadership teams is represented and will provide flexibility and autonomy to the program. To make sure flexibility and autonomy is attained the Continuous High School Improvement process was developed as a partnership effort to establish individualized programs to measure student growth. Opportunities that allow students to earn credit based on the mastery of their skills and interest is evident. For example, students are able to earn college credit beginning in middle school and also by attending the campus and technical college program. The program allows students to take college courses at the local technical college; this process is an excellent way for students to accelerate the learning process and prepare for graduation. The implementation of additional programming for students to demonstrate their skills in multiples ways is clearly demonstrated and will further help students gain the skills needed to prepare them for their future. The applicant will provide dual enrollment courses, distance and online learning, implementation of culturally responsive activities and more to support this goal. Learning resources will be made available through a variety of avenues such as the districts website, assessments and evaluations and consist communication at the state, district and local levels.</p> <p>Weakness-The applicant does not provide any specific information to show how the program resources will address the needs of English learning students and and their parents.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant provides sufficient evidence to show that all stakeholders will have access to student records, assessments, curriculums including AP courses and other learning resources in and out of school. The resources are defined and includes the district wide website, individual learning plans, teacher and administrator conferences and electronic and written communication. Strategies to provide technical support and technology training for teachers, administrators and district staff are outlined and will support program goals and improve teacher quality. The majority of the training will be provided through the central office and the district's professional development services. Parents and students will have access to the State department of education's website and will be able to retrieve student performance information, learning curriculums and other pertinent information. The plan the applicant provides to show students will receive technical support to help them achieve goals related to their individual learning process is outlined in detail. Students will receive ongoing training and their progress will be monitored. Programs where students will receive training include: AVID (college prep program), campus middle and technical college and onsite placement testing for dual enrollment courses. The state wide website is inter operable with all programs associated with the project and monitoring will be ongoing at the state, local and district level to ensure systems consistently provide support the project.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evidence the applicant presents indicates there are strategies in place to ensure continuous improvement processes, feedback on progress, ongoing corrections and improvements to stakeholders. The process will include the Cycle of Results model created by the district as a part of their strategic plan. The Cycle of Results components include: collecting &amp; analyzing multiple data sources, plan and deliver standard based instruction, conduct and balance formative assessments, utilize and analyze formative assessment data to monitor progress, adjust instructions and align intervention and enrichment to standards achievement and assess for mastery aligned to standards. Additionally, the model is strengthened through the use of master teachers and content specialists will co-teach and observe classroom instruction and provide feedback. The use of feedback will help to create individualized action plans teachers can use to improve teacher quality. Additionally, there will be opportunities for professional development delivered through planning time at schools where teachers, principals and central office will receive technology training as a part of their recertification. Weakness:The applicant does not indicate how the process presented will provide opportunities to publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded through Race to the Top – District</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan the applicant provides will allow ample opportunities for ongoing communication and engagement to support internal and external stakeholders. The use of technology such as the SchoolNet system which is accessible 24 hours and will allow the central office capability to monitor student progress using assessment benchmarks. Additionally, through the use of this system the central office will be able to realign resources, provide training and adjust the curriculum. Teachers, educators, in addition to parents and students will have access to all student online so that progress can be monitored which will allow for program and personalized plan adjustments if needed. The applicant will also evaluate performance measures and indicators and communicate with all stakeholders on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Weakness-The applicant also indicates that central office personnel will conduct learning walks i.e. tours of the schools to gain feedback from students and school personnel to ensure they have the resources needed to succeed, however the applicant does not provide any specifics regarding the frequency or process.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strength-Performance measures All-The applicant states that the district will have a number of data points they will utilize to monitor staff effectiveness that include: the percentage of highly qualified teachers and administrators in addition to summative evaluation data related to teacher performance on 2011-12 and prior school year by domain. PreK-3-The applicant provides the current data regarding the literacy achievement of PreK-3 students within the district. The data for 2012 indicates that students are performing at or above grade level. Grades 4-8-The applicant provides the current baseline data</p>		

for grades 4-8 using student attendance as the indicator. The information provided shows that students in grades 4-8 are on track to college and career readiness and the applicant proposes to increase the rate by 7% through consistent monitoring and tracking attendance and academic progress. b) The baseline data the applicant provides for students who are college ready ranges from 75.07% to 85.34%. The current state rate is 88% goal proposed by the applicant is ambitious and achievable because student will be proficient based upon state indicators. c) The baseline data the applicant provides for students who are career ready ranges from 64% to 80%. The applicant proposes to increase the rate by 10% which is ambitious and achievable based upon the indicators to be used that include attendance and school records and performance assessments tracked by the central office. Weakness- Performance measures-All-The applicant does not provide any data as required by the grant proposal. The explanation the applicant provides indicates that the district recently began the process of creating a new Student Growth Model to be used to determine the status of instructional personnel but no data is available. PreK-3-The applicant does not provide any specific information regarding the target goals, measures or non-cognitive indicators for PreK-3 to measure academic growth. Grades 4-8- The applicant does not provide any health or social-emotional indicators as a means of successful implementation of the plan. Grade 9-12-a) The data presented by the applicant indicates the current rate for students completing the FAFSA is 98% and the applicant proposes an increase of 5%. The goal presented does not provide information to indicate how the goal presented is plausible. The goal is ambitious and achievable because the applicant will ensure over 100% of the 9-12 students will complete the FAFSA. Grades 9-12 -d & e) The applicant does not provide any health or social-emotional indicators as a means of successful implementation of the plan.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is convincing evidence provided by the applicant to show there is a high quality plan in place to ensure that adjustments and revisions can easily be implemented. The quarterly testing of students will provide formative data defining strengths and weaknesses of students for purposes of remediation and informed instruction will ensure students remain on track academically. There are significant strategies to track teacher quality and professional development at both the district, school and local levels that will provide teachers and administrators the tools they need to support student achievement. The central office will be able to track progress through the use of their strategic evaluation and assessment support system and the department of Curriculum and Professional Development. Additionally, the applicant uses a district wide database that provides support in all aspects of the project. Weakness- The applicant states that teachers are surveyed regarding improving the districts benchmark assessments. However, the applicant does not provide the frequency of the distribution of the survey nor is there any indication as to how the survey will be used to make adjustments or revisions to the program.

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

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strength-a) The applicant identifies all the funds that will support the project that will be used from the Race To The Top grant. b) The applicant states that 1.1 million dollars federal funds will support the after school programs and an additional \$1.3 million dollars in federal funds will support all the targeted sites. The funds will come from various state and local funds and will be used to support program activities.

Weakness- The applicant requested Race To The Top funds to support activities that have not been identified in the proposal narrative. For example, the applicant has budgeted \$900,000 for Project Lead the Way lab training and computers. The applicant does not provide a budget narrative and it is not clear some of the expenditures were calculated i.e. \$27,000 for travel, \$22,650 for equipment and \$86,00 for Instructional Data Team.

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

10

6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The sustainability plan is presented and is reasonable to support the project after federal funds have ended. The applicant states that the project will be funded with local and state funds and computer equipment, internet access, television monitors and multimedia retrieval system and software will be supported by a state technology grant. Additionally, if funded the applicant will gain additional funding from a local university to support five elementary and middle schools within the targeted area. Weakness: More information is needed regarding the specific state and local funds to be used to support the project after funding has ended. ( i.e. Title I, business grants or other grants)

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides information regarding the development plan to continue connections between community members, schools and teachers. The project is the result of over 400 community members who created focus groups to discuss the needs of their students and as a result of the process the school district developed a strategic plan that is aligned with the four core educational reform areas of the Race To The Top grant. The Norfolk School Partners was formed to further cultivate partnerships to secure volunteers and in-kind contributions and other services to support the project. The applicant has provided evidence of 10-population level educational results for students within the target area. For example, one desired result is to increase graduation rates, student engagement, achievement of industry certifications internships with community/business leaders and increase family engagement in career opportunities. The applicant would like to expand opportunities to support schools through a mini-grant process thereby providing funds to support projects that are not otherwise funded by schools. Examples of projects include the creation of green house for 5th graders to provide hands on experiences and provide learning math/science experiences. Opportunities for parents to actively become involved with the project is evident as they will be able to provide input in the individualized plan process, monitor student progress and participate in trainings that will support college and career readiness.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's project meets the Absolute Priority 1 requirements of the Race To The Top program. The applicant proposes to provide personalized learning environments through the implementation of Open Campus, Career and Technical High School and after school programs. Students will be able to access to college courses taught by technical community college instructors in addition to traditional school core curriculum taught by high school teachers. The creation of a college and career planning process beginning in the 7th grade with input from parents and teachers is a viable process towards individual plans; plans are reviewed annually for revisions if needed. The project addresses the four core educational reform areas by providing services that will support student and teacher success. The district has created new core standard assessments and a data systems is used to track student progress. Additionally, professional development, online training and workshops are offered to teachers, principals and superintendents to ensure all staff are qualified to provide support for the students. The process will also ensure program fidelity and teacher quality.

Total	210	171
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