



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0790NC-1 for Pitt County 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>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vision clearly incorporates and builds on standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. 2. Applicant provides examples of current initiatives that strongly focus on student academic achievement (e.g., STEAM). 3. Applicant illustrates how the educational reform strategy links with the grade configurations of K-3, 4-8, and 9-12. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is unclear what constitutes the LEAs's data system based on the one example of using data to extend the TLC program to other schools. 2. Insufficient information reveals how the vision builds on district practices related to the core educational assurance areas for recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; or district's experiences in turning around lowest-achieving schools. 3. Inadequate information details what constitutes a personalized learning environment with supports based on student academic interests. <p>The evidence merits a score at the low level of the middle point range because (1) information is insufficient to explain how the vision describes a compelling and comprehensive reform effort that builds on key core educational assurance areas, and (2) it is unclear in the vision what constitutes a personalized learning environment for students with supports based on student academic interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant specifies all schools are selected in order to provide equity to all students, ensuring opportunities to accelerate learning by fostering individual needs and academic interests. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is confusing for section c to be labeled graduation rates and then present total numbers of the project's student participants, making it unclear if the numbers represent all students at all grade levels in all LEA schools or only high school students. <p>The evidence merits a score of all possible points because it is clear that all schools, all students, and all educators are participants, thus ensuring potential project impact district-wide. Data in the demographics table clarified the weakness noted.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant describes a collection of school improvement initiatives that have produced positive results in the school system. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant provides no theory of change or logic model to clearly show how the proposed collection of ed reform programs and activities clearly link to producing personalized learning environments and student supports that achieve the desired student learning outcomes. 2. Applicant inadequately describes key features of a high quality plan, such as activities and their rationale; timelines that are reasonable, feasible and ambitious; deliverables; or persons responsibilities for implementing the key activities. <p>The evidence merits a score at the low level of the medium point range because the information provided is insufficient, unclear and vague in describing a high quality plan linked to a sound theory of change model that could substantiate conceptually how the proposed collection of reform efforts will achieve intended project results, especially for all students in all schools — and particularly for the highest need students.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant clearly lists student achievement rates that the district must achieve as mandated by state and or federal requirements, high school graduation rates, and two other student outcome goals (i.e., physical activity, Digital Backpack demonstrating college and career readiness through the STEAM). 2. Applicant specifies student performance consistent with annual measurable objectives target established by the ESEA waiver. 3. LEA's end of grade math achievement gap for all subgroups (grades 3-8) exceeds state average by end of project. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End of grade annual assessment results in reading and math (grades 3-8) is ambitious and achievable but demonstrates attainment of only minimum expectations as defined by ASEA waiver. 2. LEA's end of reading achievement gap for Black students in grade 3-8 remains below state average at end of project while same measure for white students exceeds state average by almost 10 points. 3. Graduation rate for Black students increases by 37.6% by end of project, while Hispanics graduate rate increases by 66.2% by end of project (2017 post year). <p>The evidence merits a score at the upper level of the medium point range because the annual targets for student reading and math proficiency in grades 3-8 end of grade assessment result in at least a 10 point gap difference among subgroups, and meets only minimum expectations of ESEA waiver for "all students." Proportionate growth (closing of gap from baseline to post year) in graduation rate comparison of Blacks students with Hispanic students is excessively large.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strength:

1. Applicant provides data that substantiates system improvements.
2. Applicant accomplished major improvements in graduation rate in three low-performing high schools by implementing several strategies made possible by winning a \$9 mil SIG grant and a state-assigned district transformation coach.
3. Applicant provides examples of school change using state assistance (e.g., coaches) effectively.
4. Applicant specifies some schools use Edmodo, an online social media program that allows parents, students, and teachers to communicate, share assignments, review grades, and get answers to questions, and some schools use Study Island, an online program that benchmark K-8 assessments in reading and math, as the LEA awaits to fully implement the required state platform (Powerschool) that will house all student test performance data, as well as teacher, principal, and school effectiveness data. The state platform enables parents and educators to view ongoing current student performance through grade books, report cards, and progress reports.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear if the improvement in number of schools meeting AYP compared to AMO is because of successful LEA initiatives or a difference in how the subgroup measurement was determined for AYP vs. AMO accountability requirements.
2. It is somewhat unclear if the graduation rate improvement made in the "other three" high schools were supported by the grant and state-designated coach or by internal funds and personnel who demonstrated leadership and appropriate decision-making to scale up lessons learned and successful practices from the low performing schools.
3. Inadequate evaluative empirical data/information produced by a third-party evaluator or objective internal evaluation is provided to substantiate the conclusion that number of TLC teachers in a school is only reason for improvements in a school. In 2012, one school (Welcome Middle) with 3 TLCs achieved 9 times less EOG Composite Growth than a school (Belvoir Elem.) with 2 TLCs.

The evidence merits a score at the low level of the high point range because ample data demonstrate impressive results in key school improvement initiatives, yet insufficient information explains if improvements may have been extraordinary because of changes in definitions for measures reported, or highly dependent on state-mandated transformation coaches that will not be present in the RTT-D effort.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant specifies LEA releases information that enables Pitt County's primary newspaper to provide an online searchable list of actual Pitt County School's employee salaries by employee and/or school.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides no information to reveal how the LEA informs the public of non-personnel expenditures at the school level or if such information is available.
2. Applicant provides insufficient information to conclude the LEA provides school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration directly to the public in print publications or electronically so as to broadly inform and educate the public of such expenditures.

The evidence merits a score at the upper level of the middle point range because of the weaknesses noted.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant provides letter of support from the state level indicating project aligns with state READY and RttT initiatives, and a letter from local attorney with opinion that project implementation is possible without violating state laws.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant presents no examples of specific LEA policies or regulations that demonstrate a foundation of successful conditions exist for implementing specific strategies or activities that will create personalized learning environments in schools for students and educators.
2. Applicant provides insufficient detail to explain compellingly how a variety of pilots, programs and district initiatives are underway that culminate in a district culture and climate of success conditions for creating personalized learning environments and related supports in schools for students and educators.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because insufficient detail is provided to convincingly conclude the LEA has created policies, regulations and practices that are conditions for successfully creating a personalized learning environment for student and educators in all schools.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes numerous LEA-formed stakeholder groups (e.g., School Improvement Advisory Council, PTA Council, Superintendent's Student Advisory council, Diversity task Force) that could inform proposal development.
2. Applicant specifies a 20-member district RttT team was appointed and completed certain tasks during proposal development.
3. Applicant acquired strong letters of support.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides few specifics to substantiate how teachers were engaged in the planning process, except to vote on the application, and it is unclear how many teachers served on the 20-member RttT committee.
2. Other than representation on the 20-member RttT committee, the applicant provides no information to explain how parents and students (or principals) were engaged in developing the proposal.
3. It is unclear what feedback was offered by teachers, parents and students and how any was used in developing or revising the proposal.
4. It is unclear that any persons in business, faith-based, civic or other community groups were engaged in proposal development.

The evidence merits a score at the low level of the medium point range because almost no information substantiates use of a proposal development process that meaningfully engaged teachers, parents/families, students, principals, community members/groups, or other stakeholders—although the LEA maintains numerous stakeholder advisory groups.

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

1. Applicant examined school district capacity and found technology infrastructure adequate to support project implementation.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant specifies "This proposal will address and meet our remaining needs and gaps." But no plan is presented to describe the needs and gaps.

The evidence merits a score at the upper end of the low point range because applicant inadequately describes educational improvement initiatives that are currently underway in the LEA, specifies the RTT-D proposal will meet the remaining gaps and needs, but provides no information regarding a high quality plan to identify the gaps and needs.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant explains the six years at the K-5 level will provide students engaging, authentic, personal learning experiences in reading, math, science, social studies, the arts, computer literacy skills and blended learning experiences, and the personal devices enhance and motivate student's in the STEAM framework to prepare for transition into grades 6-8 exploratory span of the program.
2. Applicant specifies students in grades 4-8 exploratory span will be exposed to diverse, unique experiences where they begin to develop a personal identity, and in eighth grade, select a concentration for grades 9-12 study.
3. Applicant specifies personalized learning environment will be created frequently through the flipped classroom instruction strategy, and the student becomes responsible to engage in video lesson independently outside of the regular instructional day.
4. Applicant describes teachers will use data from the EOGs and Measurements of Student Learning (MSL) to constantly develop and adapt a personalized reading curriculum to meet the unique needs of all students.
5. Applicant specifies all students in grades 4-12 will create and develop an electronic portfolio (i.e., Digital Backpack) that will include their work samples, resources, and projects that they have produced on their path to being college and career ready.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant's information description in learning section lacks coherence, as information on many elements of numerous programs proposed for implementation are presented without clearly linking them to the required selection criterion, that is, C(1) a,b,c and their respective subheads.
2. It is unclear what accommodations and high-quality strategies are designed specifically for the highest need students in subjects other than k-8 reading (i.e., TLCMC model) to help ensure that students are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.
3. It is unclear that all students in STREAM will be able to select courses based on career interests, as is possible in the Health Sciences Academy example.
4. Applicant specifies each year, students, staff and parents will become more familiar with how to use the 1:1 technology devices but provides no information or details regarding training for staff, students or their parents.
5. Applicant specifies the technology tool will help teachers provide the necessary interventions for each student to achieve his/her individual goals but does not explain how each student will be helped to understand that what they he/she learning is key to success in accomplishing personal goals, or how with support of parents and educators the student will identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.
6. It is unclear if all students, with support of parents and educators, will develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, or only those students who attend the STREAM summer camp.
7. Although the applicant specifies English II EOCs and ongoing formative and summative assessments guide high school students through exploration of genre studies and world, American and British literature, it is unclear how this clearly gives students adequate access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

8. It is unclear how the Pitt County Board of Education goal for all schools to have at least two family events per year is specifically incorporated as a support component for the many learning activities noted in the plan.
9. No information is presented that reveals specific timelines for the many activities described for project implementation, parties responsible for implementing the activities, or related deliverables—each an essential element of a high quality plan.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because of the numerous weaknesses noted, particularly lack of coherence and clarity in explaining how key project components for learning align with specific criterion, and incomplete descriptions of several key components required in a high quality plan.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes the specific roles of the teacher leaders (TLCs) in the Teacher Leadership Cohort Model Classroom (TLCMC) component of professional development, whereby inexperienced teachers will be nurtured and groomed by a TLC mentor who has demonstrated the ability to produce high student achievement, maintain a passion for collaboration, and desire to better the teaching profession.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides inadequate empirical results to substantiate that previous or current reform initiatives of the LEA, which produced impressive improvements in student achievement, are appropriately replicable for successfully creating personalized learning environments for educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards.
2. It is unclear if all teachers in the LEA currently participate in a PLC or only those teachers in the TLCMC initiative.
3. It is unclear how PLCs currently and/or will function to increase the individual and collective capacity of teachers to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies; adapt content and instruction in ways to provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks based on student academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches; and use feedback of the LEA's evaluation system to improve effectiveness of teachers.
4. Applicant provides insufficient information to explain how the collaboration produced by the TLCMC between teachers in the classroom and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has created the "individualized learning environment" noted by the applicant, or enabled teachers to individually and collectively support personalized learning environments for all students in a school.
5. Applicant provides inadequate details to clearly explain how all teachers in each school will have access to training, and consequently know how to identify optimal student learning approaches and use high quality learning resources that address a student's individual academic needs and interests.
6. It is unclear how all teachers in each school will know how to use processes and tools to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the available resources in meeting student needs.
7. It is unclear how cross-curricular planning by teachers results in the teachers using high quality learning resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards.
8. It is unclear how school leadership, after completing the foundational training, will implement school-wide policies promoting personalized learning environments through staff collaboration.
9. Applicant provides insufficient information to describe specific timelines for the many teaching and leading activities to be implemented, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, or related deliverables—each an essential element of a high quality plan.
10. No high-quality plan is presented for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, or specialty areas.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because of the numerous weaknesses noted, particularly lack of clarity or details in explaining when key teaching and leading activities will be implemented, who is the responsible party for implementation of activities, and specific deliverables that will support creating a personalized learning environment for students and educators, especially in hard to staff schools.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes exceptional capacity of central office personnel, especially in a high poverty rural area, to provide technical support for project implementation.
2. Applicant describes convincing examples of how the LEA offers opportunities for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery rather than on seat time studying a topic, including the leverage of a possible new state board of education policy (i.e., Credit by Demonstrated Mastery).
3. Applicant specifies that the Exceptional Children's Program provides learning resources and research-based reading and mathematics programs designed to meet the needs of high need learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the Educational Programs and Services (EPS) team members will strategically focus their individual and collective expertise and time to provide supportive services to all schools for creating a personalized learning environment, as compared to compliance monitoring of other district-wide initiatives.
2. Applicant provides no information to explain how specific LEA policies provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.
3. In the context of LEA practices that grant autonomy only to schools that demonstrate student proficiency and make acceptable growth, it is unclear how school leadership teams have sufficient autonomy to implement a new initiative to create personalized learning environments for student and educators.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because it is unclear how district level policies and compliance-oriented monitoring practices facilitate sufficient autonomy at each school to successfully facilitate creation of a personalized learning environment reflective of student interests, needs and abilities.

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

Strengths:

1. Applicant clearly describes possible inequities that could exist in technology access in a high poverty rural school district and plans a 1:1 technology initiative to appropriately address the inequity issue.
2. Applicant specifies each school provides access to online programs such as digital video streaming, electronic encyclopedia databases, and core content for remediation and acceleration purposes.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear if the LEA's information technology systems allow parents and students to export their information in an open

data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.

2. Applicant provides insufficient information to ensure if the LEA and schools can or will use interoperable data systems in the project (e.g., systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data).

3. Essential elements of a high quality plan are absent in the applicant's information to reveal specific timelines for implementing major activities (e.g., 1:1 technology program), who is the responsible party, and deliverables.

4. It is unclear if the LEA and schools can or will use interoperable data systems in the project and how technical supports will be available to aid parents in using information technology systems.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because key elements of a high quality plan are not described and insufficient information specifies if the LEA's information technology systems allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and use the data in other electronic learning systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant clearly describes personalized learning experiences the students will receive at the k-3, 4-8, and 9-12 grade levels of the proposed program.

2. Applicant clearly acknowledges the importance of continuous improvement.

3. Applicant explains how the new assessment of teachers will more clearly evaluate which teachers undertake the challenge of ensuring their students experience high impact learning that produces high student growth.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the applicant expects the focus on the three different grade configurations of foundations, explorations, and concentrations that creates a unity of purpose is a sufficient strategy for providing timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals.

2. It is unclear how the STEAM framework provides key elements of a continuous improvement strategy for monitoring and measuring project progress or outcomes.

3. Limited information describes how important project improvement information will be shared publicly by the LEA.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the medium point range because inadequate information substantiates the project has a clear rigorous strategy for monitoring and measuring project implementation or an adequate process for sharing any results publicly.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes how ongoing internal communications focus on teacher professional development and related student performance measures.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides insufficient information to convincingly document well-designed strategies for ongoing communications and engagement with internal and external stakeholders will be implemented in the project.

The evidence merits a score at the lower level of the low point range because of the weakness noted.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Ambitious targets are specified for percentage of Algebra 1 students with effective teacher and principal by post-grant year of project, including closing of gaps among subgroups.
2. Ambitious targets are specified for percentage of English 1 students with effective teacher and principal by post-grant year of project.
3. LEA targets for state-legislated reading requirement for PreK-3 students are ambitious yet achievable.
4. Targets for third-graders at reading level shows ambitious yet achievable closing of achievement gaps.
5. Targets for students in grades 4-8 that will be on grade level in math achievement are ambitious yet achievable.
6. Applicant sets ambitious yet achievable targets for the measure Digital Backpack demonstrating students college and career readiness through the STEAM project component.
7. Applicant sets ambitious yet achievable targets for measure students who complete and submit Free Application for Federal Student Aid (F AFSA) form.
8. Applicant sets ambitious yet achievable targets for college- and career-readiness performance measure and sets ambitious gains in closing the achievement gaps over the project period.

Weaknesses:

1. It unclear how the applicant selects a goal by 2017 to increase effective math teachers/principals to 56.7% in grades 4-8 when 3 of the subgroups already exceed that percentage at the baseline (Blacks 50.4%, Whites 57.2%, Hispanics 60.2%, Two or more races 40.1% and Asian 60.4%).
2. Gains at the end of the project in the percentage of students in grades 4-8 with effective teachers in math and reading are minimal considering the anticipated impact advocated in the project plan.
3. Methodology for calculating some measures are not presented in the table (e.g. graduation rate).
4. Applicant provides confusing information in table (E)(3) Performance Measures -Required for applicants with participating students in grades 4-8 by indicating in the left column that the performance measure is for math, and then indicating reading is the applicable population in the right column heading.
5. Applicant provides inadequate information to describe how each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information for gauging project implementation success, or how each measure will be reviewed and improved over time.

The evidence merits a score at the upper level of the middle point range because of the weaknesses cited.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant appropriately links evaluation of technology initiative to goal for math and reading achievement of students throughout the district at all levels.
2. Applicant appropriately leverages internal and external evaluation of a TQP grant to provide evaluative effectiveness of RTT-D project investments in the Teacher Leader Cohmi Model Classroom (TLCMC) component.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant does not provide essential elements of a high quality plan, such as timelines for activities to be conducted in the evaluation, parties responsible for implementing the activities, specific goals, and deliverables.

The evidence merits a score at the upper level of the low point range because of the lack of information necessary to determine key elements of the evaluation plan (i.e., timelines, responsibilities, deliverables, goals, and complete description of evaluative activities).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant provides ample description to substantiate budget requests for the four project components are reasonable, sufficient and appropriate to implement major activities proposed in RTT-D program.
2. Overall budget summary provides a clear and thoughtful rationale for project investments and priorities.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant has minimal focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments in schools.
2. It is somewhat unclear how the budget for the Teacher Leadership Cohort Model Classroom (TLCMC) requires an investment of about \$9 mil in personnel and only about \$132, 000 in stipends.
3. Insufficient information in a table listing major project task, timelines, responsibilities, and deliverables for each of the four project components makes less clear how the budgeted expenses closely align with tasks to be performed.

The evidence merits a score at the low level of the high point range because additional detail is necessary about major tasks by year by project to more accurately estimate itemized calculations of necessary budget expenses, which also are necessary to determine if costs may be necessary for sustaining selected project activities after the grant period.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant specifies growth in State allotments to the LEA along with the overall evaluation of current programs and students will provide the resources needed to ensure sustainability of the Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math (STEAM) program after the grant period.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant does not provide information that describes any element of a high quality plan for sustaining the RTT-D funded project after the end of the grant period, and is totally dependent on economic conditions producing new revenues, state and local budget allocations, and future State and Federal legislation that might offer funding possibilities.

The evidence merits a score at the middle level of the low point range because no high quality plan is described by the applicant. Although the applicant describes anticipated support to sustain the STEAM component, the overwhelming evidence is sustainability of the RTT-D program's major components are highly dependent on economic conditions, State and Local budgets, and future State and Federal legislation, not a viable high quality plan that commits the LEA to future funding.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant clearly specifies a compelling list of local non-profit agencies/groups that comprise the partnership for the Student Success Academy, who have over four decades of combined experience with at-risk youth.
2. Applicant details the goal and major activities to be implemented at the academy, with organizations/persons responsible for their implementation.
3. Applicant provides exceptional data that substantiates previous success of the academy, revealing important positive impact on students.
4. Applicant specifies six criteria that substantiate that the academy serves students of highest need.
5. Applicant provides important and convincing data from evaluative results that reveal exceptional positive impact on academy participants as cohort groups.
6. Applicant provides ambitious yet achievable annual targets for a set of highly credible population level performance measures, and specifies desired results.

Weaknesses:

1. Although an exemplary list of indicators and related analyzed results are presented for several cohorts of the academy, it is unclear how the partnership plans to track and use results of the proposed indicators to improve results over time.
2. It is unclear if the partnership has a planned strategy to scale up the Student Success Academy to more needy students and their parents.
3. It is unclear how the partnership will routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing the Student Success Academy.
4. It is unclear how the partnership builds the capacity of appropriate school staff to implement the Student Success Academy.

The evidence merits a score at the low level of the high point range, particularly because of the documented success of the Academy in creating exceptionally positive results for high need students. Point deductions are attributed to inadequate information to understand clearly how the partnership will track data and use it in improvements, unclear plans regarding scale up the Academy to serve even greater numbers of high need students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant does not provide a compelling logic model to substantiate how the project components are necessarily linked to creating a personalized learning environment in each school for all students and educators. It is unclear if the project activities described by the applicant are more intended to replicate and scale up current and often grant-funded LEA school improvement interventions that increase student responsibility for improving test scores or to implement a cohesive set of

activities designed around a theory of change that are intended to create a learning environment for students with strategically provided positive supports from educators, parents and other stakeholders.

The evidence very minimally merits a “Met” score for meeting the absolute priority.

Total	210	108
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0790NC-2 for Pitt County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposal confirms that the four core educational assurance areas are accepted and being implemented. - critical concepts in support of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision addressed in the applicant's vision include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teachers and administrators use personalized data to address learning needs and adjust instruction. - teacher support, professional development, and critical tools needed to accelerate and deepen learning and increasing teacher effectiveness. - focusing on building essential skills in science, math, technology and engineering, as well as the arts. - technology immersion in grades 4-12 which allows students to arrive in a paperless and information rich classroom centered on individualization. - recognizes that health is not only an important component of school success, but also affects the future quality of life. - the LEA scaffolds for visual impact and ease of understanding a chart demonstrating their model. - the applicant's concept of satisfying the requirement for deepening student learning is implied in their model by describing 3 stages of learning for their students: foundation, exploration and concentration. - the strength of their reform efforts in articulating their vision comes from recent successes in several programs and the principles gleaned from those successes. - one significant aspect that is undocumented pertains to the potential impact on achieving the vision through educator evaluation systems and recognition strategies . - the overall rating for this section is in the high range. 		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant has elected to include all students in the LEA as a means for ensuring equity.
- critical requirements that have been met are indications that approximately 61% of students come from low-income families; approximately 61% are high need; number of participating educators; and the list of schools.
- the overall evaluation for this section acknowledges that all requirements are met and is at the high range.

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

- since all schools are involved in the grant application, the LEA's future focus is not on the scaling-up potential for all schools but, rather, on how the LEA will reach its outcome goals.
- the elements identified for scaling-up across the LEA and improving outcomes are:
 1. Read 3D, a validated research-based literacy assessment program for diagnosing and personalizing reading for all primary students. Ensuring that students leaving grade 3 know how to read is a significant outcome measure.
 2. PD 360 program for administrators and teachers in the district provided immediate professional development support as well as the ability to collect
 3. classroom observation data for improving instruction. Hence there is personalized learning for educators. The focus of the new teacher evaluation system shifts beyond highly qualified teachers to highly effective teachers. Hence the focus is not on input but on outcome.
 4. training in the Common Core State Standards and new North Carolina Essential Standards so that educators know curricular outcomes.
 5. financial incentives for educators in lower performing schools.
 6. incorporate a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) framework that adds the arts to basic STEM education for a more comprehensive, holistic approach. This approach helps engage students by making curriculum connections while immersing them in the common core standards of these disciplines. Within the STEAM framework, students will explore and create an ongoing Digital Backpack (DP) from 4th grade to 12th grade. Digital Backpack will be an electronic portfolio empowering students to design, manage, and record progress towards their personalized learning goals.
 7. increasing technology hardware in the district for teachers and students will increase, encourage, and empower personalized learning.
 8. to address the Healthful Living BMI goal Pitt County Schools,' students are already engaged in vigorous physical activity and measurement will be added.

These programs identified above align nicely with meaningful reform for improving student learning outcomes. Elements of a high-quality plan are missing. There are no indications of the activities which should be undertaken, the timelines for those activities, or the responsible parties.

- the overall evaluation of this section is at the medium range and at the upper end.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant has addressed goals for the 4 required areas and has provided baseline as well as 5 year goals to include one year beyond the grant period. All sub-groups are appropriately identified with current levels of achievement as well as their respective goals. Therefore, the tables presented completely meet all requirements.
- examination of the goals and whether they are ambitious and achievable, the following observations are made:
 - higher performing sub-groups have goals for marginal improvement which are sufficiently ambitious and achievable.
 - low achieving groups have very ambitious goals toward equity. The achievable aspect is worrisome. Many of the goals project improvement targets which are approximately 30% greater levels of achievement than currently experienced. These goals appear unrealistic because, where the tables provide 2 years of baseline data, the improvement made from year 1 to year 2 is significantly less than what is projected into the future. If these goals are too unrealistic frustration will quickly set in and motivation will decrease rather than increase. Accountability mechanisms used within the LEA may be seen to punish rather than reward.

- overall evaluation of this section is at the high range but at the low end.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant provides data in the narrative only without the assistance of charts which require every box to be filled so that an unbiased reviewer can determine the degree to which improvement has occurred. - In 2009, 13 schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and then as the standard and requirements continued to increase, by 2011, no schools in Pitt County made Adequate Yearly Progress (A YP). This result does not portray success. - in 2012, 11 schools met the goal for subgroups now called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) by the department of Education. These 11 schools met proficiency for 100% of their AMOs and the district grew from 64.5% of their subgroups being proficient to 74.6% proficient in 2012. Of the 17 measurable subgroups for Reading and Math, 13 improved their proficiency. While improvement appears to have taken place there is now indication that improvement was incremental. It is possible that 2012 had a number of spurts which were outliers and, perhaps, unrealistic for subsequent years. - the graduation rate improved from 57.4% in 2009 to 73.1% in 2012, with two high schools achieving graduation rates above 80%. The dropout rate improved from 4.5% in 2009 to 2.94% in 2011. Again, there is insufficient data to determine whether improvement was incremental. - improvement data involving persistently low-achieving schools demonstrates remarkable gains in the graduation rates at 3 high schools designated as low performing. The LEA scaled-up the reforms to the other schools which also demonstrated substantial improvements. - composite scores are provided for 5 low achieving elementary schools with a consistently improving trend line evident in 2 of the schools. - a platform is available where all student test performance data will be stored for easy access to parents and educators which can be used to enhance personalized learning. Further, Professional Learning Communities are established that require student data be analyzed for planning instruction. All student data gathered through formative and summative assessment will be analyzed for growth with appropriate readjustments made for instruction. - all schools administer formative assessments to all students at three times during the year. This data, analyzed by the district, school, classroom, and students, determine next steps for instruction. - select schools have implemented student data folders used for students to track their own data as well as implementing student led conferences. These conferences enhance communication with parents while requiring the student to assess their own performance. - 9-12 teachers administer assessments at six-week intervals and analyze results to be shared with students and then used to guide instruction and determine student academic needs. This process remains an integral part of personalizing instruction for high school students. - transparency for school level test results as well as a school report cards are available for the public on the LEA website. Parents can access this information readily and make their own decisions regarding school choice. - the overall evaluation for this section is in the medium range. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

- information in this section is sparse but what is provided indicates that actual personnel salaries are made available to the public by employee and by school. There is no indication whether reporting is grouped for instructional staff only or school level teachers only.
- actual non-personnel expenditures are not reported.
- evaluation of this section is in the medium range.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant points to a number of pilots underway in the LEA as well as the implementation of technology throughout the district which will create the catalyst for successful individualized learning environments in all schools as justification that successful conditions precede this grant.
- a supporting letter from the state regarding this proposal indicated its alignment with the state's RTTT efforts.
- a legal opinion assures that no State, legal or regulatory limitations would become barriers to successful implementation of this grant proposal.
- the response to this section is rather sparse, however, and could have included more specific examples of how autonomy is ensured that the elements of personalized learning would be facilitated.
- overall this section is evaluated at the medium level.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- In preparation for this proposal, a district RttT team was appointed to streamline the vision and strategies that supported district goals and mission as well as align to the efforts of current North Carolina RttT efforts. This team of 20 people included administrative leaders, teachers, parents and other district support personnel. This team took key strategies identified in the district and designed them to meet the District RttT requirements. The three key platforms were also shared with the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council for their feedback and support. Hence, stakeholder participation in development is indicated at the district level, however, there is no indication that school-level activity was involved. From the narrative, it is difficult to ascertain whether the focus was on the specifics of this proposal.
- The overwhelming affirmative response of licensed staff at 87.3 % rate of approval for this grant proposal identifies a strong indicator of the culture of staff readiness and responsiveness to individualized learning opportunities for all students. This level of support exceeds minimum requirements.
- letters of support were received from mayors, post-secondary institutions, state program leaders and the Chamber of Commerce. Missing from the supporting cast were indications from parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, and advocacy groups. To be fair, the applicant indicates that parents across the district have been consulted in the development of the district vision which is incorporated into this proposal.
- overall, the narrative provides the impression that input from stakeholders has been on components of the proposal which were developed prior to this specific grant. Support for those elements have then been extrapolated as support for this grant. Evidence does not seem to indicate that a great deal of involvement occurred in the actual preparation of this proposal.
- overall, the evaluation of this section is at the medium level.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- an assessment was undertaken to determine whether each school has enough bandwidth for each and every student to access the internet at the same time which is necessary for personalized and individualized learning.
- readiness for this grant is also predicated on the allocation of instructional coaches in every K-12 school in preparation for the rollout of the Common Core standards, and curriculum specialist personnel help teachers with content knowledge and effective instructional strategies in English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, and the Arts.

- a gap is perceived regarding the current use of Teacher Leader Cohort Model Classroom plan where only a partial complement of staff were identified. This proposal would seek to increase this resource and replicate strong gains in student success experienced previously.
- The proposal identifies a gap and expands the 1:1 technology initiative at one school to a K-12 systemic approach using technology tools to develop students' 21st century skills.
- initial implementation of the Read 3D technology-based assessment evaluates the reading ability of each student as the teacher documents performance using a tablet device. In between benchmarking assessments, the teacher also uses the device to provide interventions and to improve reading skill development for each individual student. This innovation is a significant aspect for personalizing student learning.
- the LEA perceives there to be a gap in its robotics technology and biotechnology within high schools' and middle schools' curriculum offerings to support the STEAM initiative.
- therefore, the LEA meets the criteria by identifying gaps in current programs which can be scaled-up. It does not intend to use the project to launch into new initiatives and, therefore, does not provide a plan for such purposes. Rationale for the voracity of the existing programs justify the approach taken in scaling-up. To this end, deliverables are identified with sufficient activities articulated. Missing in the plan are timelines and identification of the parties responsible.
- overall, the evaluation of this section is at the high range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant addresses the vast majority of the criteria identified for improving learning and teaching.

STUDENTS:

- In conjunction with the reading component, STEAM will provide opportunities for students at the K-3 level to learn basic components of these foundational disciplines and how they are connected. Foundational studies will continue at the 4-8 grade level with an exploratory choice of research and study suited individual abilities and interests.
- students will be provided instruction based on formative reading assessments such as Read 3D, EOG, and EOC, and other formative and summative assessments. The data from the assessments will be integrated with the Common Core College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Reading and research-based strategies to create a personalized reading curriculum for each student.
- A unique aspect of STEAM is the current Health Sciences Academy, which allows students to select courses based on a health career interest.
- No "one-size fits all" recipe can maximize student achievement. Therefore, the learning environments in Pitt County will be designed so learners will be given the tools to sustain continuous growth, with supplemental instruction and guidance from the teacher. This transition from teacher-centered to more student-centered learning will provide each student with appropriate instruction to meet his/her individual needs.
- Each student having access to the personal devices will enhance and motivate exploration in the STEAM framework and provide engaging, authentic, personal learning experiences during reading, math, science, social studies, and the arts, building computer literacy skills and fostering blended learning experiences.
- as students create their Digital Backpacks, they are empowered with the ability to choose a learning path based on their interest and abilities that will guide them through high school.
- In the 4-8 exploratory span, students will be exposed to diverse, unique experiences where they begin to develop a personal identity and, in eighth grade, select a concentration for 9-12 study
- criterion (a)iv and (a)v do not appear to be addressed.
- an emphasis of parental support is not addressed.

ACCESS

- all 4-12 students in PCS will create and develop an electronic portfolio, known as a Digital Backpack, of their work samples, resources, and projects that they have produced on their path to being college and career ready. These Digital Backpacks will track digital learning content and provide an authentic assessment of each student's growth
- collaborative partners of Pitt Community College (PCC) and East Carolina University (ECU) will offer K-12 STEAM summer camps for students in the district.
- Equipping every K-8 school in Pitt County with a Teacher Leader Cohort Model Classroom (TLCMC) will infuse our schools with high-quality instructional, collaborative classrooms that focus on a reading program accommodating individual student needs. A proven, highly effective TLC teacher who mentors a beginning, first year teacher and two Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) interns from ECU will facilitate these classrooms. By creating two TLCMCs in every elementary school, one in every middle school and three in every K-8 school, district-wide equity is achieved and balance throughout the district is ensured
- A primary goal of the co-teaching model will create a team of teachers who co-plan, co-teach and co-assess students which will result in more focused, personalized instruction for students.
- A 1:1 technology initiative will provide students the needed tools to facilitate their personalized learning environment: K-3 students will receive a tablet and 4-12 students will be given a laptop
- the LEA will accelerate and increase reading opportunities for those high needs students who enter kindergarten at preschool developmental levels. In conjunction with the teacher guided lessons that incorporate Marzano's nine high yield strategies, Bloom's Taxonomy, and other research based approaches, teachers can assimilate instruction based on a wealth of applications, books, and other resources that will be loaded on the technology devices. This technology tool will help teachers provide the necessary interventions for each student to achieve his/her individual goals.
- Ongoing formative and summative assessments will tailor the reading instruction for each student. Individual progress monitoring will ensure interventions are consistently evaluated for individual student effectiveness. Constant feedback and prescriptive instruction will ensure improved student reading achievement.
- as indicated above in (a), parents' areas of involvement are not identified for (b).
- the programs identified above adequately address all of the criteria in section (b).
- the LEA's emphasis on technology tools necessary for student use is being accommodated.

High Quality Plan

- the deliverables are to provide all students the necessary instructional strategies, tools, and technology to ensure these goals are realized. Specific activities associated with these deliverables are appropriately explained.
- goals by which the plan will be measured are provided.
- Ongoing formative assessments and state-required Measures of Student Learning (MSL), End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) summative tests gauge student growth and will be part of the district's ongoing assessment cycle.
- missing elements for a high-quality plan include timelines and identification of the parties responsible.
- the overall evaluation for this section is in the medium range and at the high end of the range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Training

- all teachers have been engaged in training of the new standards leading to college- and career - readiness.
- the TLCMC approach models best practices and methods for instruction with a focus in reading, multiple intelligences, Thinking Maps, and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
- support for new teachers is available through co-teaching with the BTI and TQP interns. After a year of coaching teachers will be prepared to work collaboratively with others, implement effective instructional practices, utilize and share resources, and facilitate instruction individualized for each student in his/her own classroom.
- a direct result of the TLCMC benefiting teachers and students within the TLCMC will be the collaboration between teachers in the classroom and with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) throughout the school.

- teachers in every elementary and middle school in Pitt County will have the ability to observe master educators and solicit feedback and guidance in a safe and nurturing environment.
- based on student needs, a variety of instructional settings will be adapted including small group and one to one instruction.
- the primary academic focus of the TLCMC improves the quality of literacy instruction through collaborative teaching and investing in long-term, job-embedded professional development.
- TLC teacher leaders will convene monthly as a group to discuss strategies, share effective practices, reflect on their experiences.
- TLC teachers will also be critically analyzing data and evaluating current practices to determine changes or enhancements to the instructional strategies, methods or tools being used to teach reading, ensuring consistency and cohesiveness throughout the district.

Resources:

- the three major components of the PCS-CCI-RttT plan equip teachers with the support, tools, and perspective necessary to carry out this challenging endeavor.
- Using the CCSS as a guide, combined with data from Read 3D, EOGs, Measures of Student Learning (MSL) and continuing formative assessments to determine learning needs, teachers will work together to develop instruction that is challenging, differentiated, and fosters student responsibility.
- equipping each student with a technology device empowers teachers to utilize interventions and resources based on student need. This tool will serve as an instrument for teachers to implement personalized learning for every student.
- the STEAM initiative will equip 19 classrooms and employ 13 Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers so that every middle and high school has a STEAM teacher and with fully-functioning lab facilities. Implementation and creation of these programs will require teachers to receive training.
- digital Backpacks for students in grades 4-12 will chart growth, record success, and demonstrate plans for personalized future instruction. Digital Backpacks students will use technology to take benchmark tests and online assessments, providing almost instantaneous, real-time feedback used to drive future instruction.
- all teachers and students will use Google Apps to create and store documents and to work collaboratively with others.

Evaluation

- teachers and leaders will be measured through the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System. Data will be analyzed from evaluations and form the basis for individual and school instructional improvements and reform. Based on this data, school leadership teams will provide additional training and support to teachers and/or the entire school in specific areas that require improvement.

High Quality Plan

- deliverables of the plan are to equip teachers with the supports, tools, and perspectives necessary to carry out creating personalized learning environments.
- the major activities of the plan will be implementation of the K-8 Teacher Leader Cohort Model Classroom (TLCMC), a K-12 Science and Technology through Engineering and the Arts with a Math foundation (STEAM) framework, and a technology rich learning environment where K-3 will have 1:1 technology learning stations and a 1:1 technology initiative will be in place for all students in grades 4 -12.
- while performance measures are identified and have been used, goals for these measures are not indicated.
- timelines for the activities are not indicated nor are the persons responsible.
- the applicant provides evidence for the criteria required for 3 of the 4 sub-components. Missing are the ingredients for a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective staff as well as staffing difficult assignments.
- the overall evaluation of this section is in the medium range and at the high end.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant has demonstrated that all participating schools have equitable levels of support. - as schools in the district demonstrate student proficiency, make growth, and meet state and federal guidelines, the district guarantees more autonomy to local schools. However, when a school does not meet expectations, the district requires a more hands on approach. Therefore autonomy is granted on the basis of success in meeting student needs which is a strong demonstration of leadership. Monthly walkthroughs to evaluate instructional activities and student rigor and engagement are utilized to monitor performance. - the district has examples of how pacing according to mastery rather than time in learning is utilized. - methods are already evident and will be expanded to ensure that students can demonstrate standards at multiple times and ways. - resources are adaptable and accessible to all students. - all of the criterion are addressed in the application. Therefore the evaluation of this section is at the high range. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - virtually all of the requirements of this section are in evidence within this LEA. Issues of equity are not a problem especially since such a high percentage of families are low-income. Access to content and tools are readily available along with necessary technical support. Data can be used in several electronic systems. - the interoperable aspect of data systems is not addressed by the applicant. - a significant oversight in this narrative pertains to the services outlined in this section being available to parents and other stakeholders. - the overall evaluation of this section is rated as medium. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - much of this narrative is repetitive with previous sections and provides sparse information relative to the requirements in this section. - the LEA will administer annual educator evaluations. Key leadership at the school level will strive to ensure that every student will be served or have access to effective or highly effective teachers during the school day. The evaluation process includes a commitment that teachers will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s). -With regard to the essential assessment component, the LEA will administer the newly revised state Ready End-of-Grade tests (EOGs)and Ready End-of Course tests (EOCs), and also the newly developed state Measures of Student Learning (MSLs) assessments for the continuous improvement process. - PowerSchool, a web-based student information system, will be implemented in the district by July 2013. Real time data will be available for attendance, grades, and transcripts for parents and students. - these, then, are the aspects of the applicant's response which address some of the requirements. There is no indication of how the applicant will acquire timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals. 		

- not evident in the narrative is evidence relative to processes in a high-quality plan. Indication is not provided regarding activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties in measuring the outcomes of the grant. Further, it does not include a plan on how the information regarding the quality of the investments will be shared publicly. It also does not demonstrate a process for making revisions during the period of the grant.
- it could be argued that measuring the effectiveness of investments in professional development, technology and staff could be wrapped into measurements of student learning; however, there need to be identified measures and a measurement process which are more correlated with these specific issues.
- the overall evaluation of this section is in the low range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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- (E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
- the applicant has not provided documentation regarding this particular element. The detailed information regarding communication on testing is superfluous to this component. Simply, there is no detail on ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders regarding adjustments and revisions to continuously improve its plan.
 - it is suggested that teachers will receive ongoing communication regarding results of their professional development programs by the relationship with the teacher evaluation system.
 - the overall evaluation of this section is at the low range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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- (E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
- the applicant provides the required number of measures along with the rationale for their selection as well as annual targets.
 - applicant-proposed measure is included which meets the requirement.
 - missing from this aspect are how the LEA will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress as well as how the measure will provide the formative leading information. Rather, there is considerable information which describes the rules for calculating the measure which may be a response to the requirement for rigor.
 - overall this section is evaluated at the medium range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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- (E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
- the applicant documents efforts to improve through technology and in working with community partners - specifically post secondary institutions.
 - working with other community partners to evaluate effectiveness is not addressed.
 - there is no reference to compensation reform, modifications of school schedules and structures, or decision-making structures .
 - the overall evaluation of this section is at the medium range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

- (F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
- the applicant's response to this section has been placed in (F)(2).
 - very detailed budget tables indicate precisely where the funding will be used.
 - the applicant addresses all of the required elements by:

- identifying funds which have been secured from other sources.
- identification of one-time funds as well as ongoing operational costs spread over the term of the grant.
- the reasonableness and sufficiency of the funding is evident because, for the most part, is supplementing current initiatives thereby scaling them up.
- the strategies described will ensure long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments at least to the extent that equipment does not need to be replaced and teachers remain with the district.

- the overall evaluation of this section is at the high range.

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

The statements below from the applicant demonstrate that there is not a sustainability plan beyond the grant period.

- The ability for one to one classroom technology to sustain after the end of the grant will be dependent on economic conditions, State and Local budgets, and future State and Federal legislation.
- The ability of the cohort model to be sustained after the end of the grant will be dependent on economic conditions, State and Local budgets, and future State and Federal legislation.
- Utilizing the growth in State allotments along with the overall evaluation of current programs and students needs will provide the resources needed to ensure sustainability of the program after completion of the grant period.

- by not having a high-quality plan the applicant appears to be leaving sustainability up to chance.

- overall this section is evaluated at the low range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant identifies and provides a detailed description of two programs operating within the LEA that involve public and private partnerships. From the description in the narrative, these are sophisticated partnerships with one (SSA) utilizing a measurement for students in comparison groups and the system as a whole who did not receive the services.

- these are sustainable partnerships with significantly positive results being recorded.

- plans for the drop-out program are to scale it up so that it becomes a year-long program rather than only a summer.

- the 3 population-level desired results align very well with the applicant's broader RTTT-D proposal.

- the data collected in these programs target resources in order to improve results.

- evidence is not provided regarding how the models might be scaled beyond the participating students.

- meetings are held with students for reviewing academic and social outcomes for each participant on a monthly basis throughout the academic school year.

- annual ambitious but achievable targets are included.

- lacking in the proposal is evidence regarding how the partnership would build the capacity of staff in participating schools as well as engaging parents and families.

- the overall evaluation for this section is at the medium range and at the high end of the range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant already is working to meet the core educational assurance areas by creating learning environments which will significantly improve teaching and learning through personalization strategies . This proposal is an effort to ramp-up the technology supports as well as the talent of teachers to address the individual needs of learners. Goals are provided as required and are designed to close gaps and achieve higher standards. Success is already being achieved and this proposal endeavors to build on that success in order that more students meet college - and career - ready standards.

Total	210	130
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0790NC-3 for Pitt County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Pitt County Schools (PCS) their vision builds upon personalized learning environments and goals which lead to college- and career-readiness through a Foundation, Exploration and Concentration for all students built upon the initiative started by the state framework in the RTTT with the Common Core Standards and benchmarks.

The proposals vision incorporates teachers and administrators using personalized data to address learning needs of students and to adjust instruction, providing an example of one of its lowest performing schools progress to demonstrate its effectiveness. Employing the Teacher-Leader Cohort program as another component of success in accelerating student learning is also provided.

STEAM initiatives will be an important focus to prepare students for a glob al economy starting in grades 4-12. The district believes all areas of STEAM are the 20 fasted growing occupations in our nation which will prepare our students for the labor force.

The PCS vision incorporates student health concerns in their personalized goals.

All four common assurance areas are not addressed completely in the vision. There is no mention of a data system. The teachers and administrators are already gathering data, but no mention of how or how much. Recruitment, rewarding and retaining teachers is not address in the vision either.

There is inadequate information on what constitutes a personalized learning environment.

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

The district chose all schools in the district to provide equity to all students. A list of the number of all students at each school

is provided, as well as the number of low income and high need students. The percentage of students from each school from low income families is calculated. The total percentage of low income student participating is well over 40%. All information provided will soundly support its proposal.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district believes their model can be replicated throughout the nation to improve educational reform. The district may be justified by the evidence presented in that in the past year 11 of its schools made AYP after having not made AYP before by improving their subgroups from 64.5% proficiency to 74.6%. Other evidence provided to support its theory of replication to scale up is a 7.6% in reduction of 10 or more absences in students in grades K-8; graduation rates increased from 57.4% to 73.02%; Teacher Leader Cohort made gains with 80% making growth and 60% making high growth; and highly qualified staff increased from 94.4% to 96.36%.

In order to accomplish these goals, they have have outline four strategies that will take place in the proposal with some of the accompanying activities. Unclear in the plan are the timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has goals which are mandated by their ESAE waiver. Most of the goals are ambitious yet achievable. In grades 3-8 the subgroups do not identify students with disabilities. The goals are performance oriented on reading and math and use the end-of –course test. The subgroup achievement gaps are appropriately reduced in the goals. In tenth grade for each grade, there is a significant percentage gain from last year to this year’s goal in each of the subgroups without an explanation for the significant gain. Decreasing the achievement gap was also addressed with ambitious yet achievable goals, here again grades 3-8 do not address students with disabilities. High school graduation rates were address with appropriate goals excluding students with disabilities, as was college enrollment rates. Both closed the achievement gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Since 2009, the district has put into place in its 20 Title I schools a *Language!* program, benchmarking, and monitoring of instruction through walkthroughs and observation. No schools had made AYP before 2009 and 13 have since. The requirements continue to rise. Eleven schools had 100% of their subgroups meet proficiency on annual goals. Of the 17 measurable subgroups for reading and math, 13 schools improved their proficiency.

The district has created a dropout task force comprised of community members, school staff, and district staff. This task force has been a strong agent in decreasing dropout rate from 4.5% to 2.94% and increasing the graduation rate from 57.4% to 73.1%.

The district turned around three high schools with the aid of a SIG grant. Each high school fell below 60% graduation rate. Over a three year period of time, the schools employed many new practices, learn ing theories and assigned a district instructional coach. All three high schools have over a 60% graduation rate. One school now has an 83.3% from a 55.1% in 2009.

In 2009 when North Carolina received a RTTT grant Pitt County had one Priority school. It had a composite score of 46%. Now is composite score is 66.3%, providing evidence of Pitt County’s ability to raise scores of low achieving schools.

North Carolina is in the bid process to purchase their software. Pitt County uses EVAAS for teacher effectiveness data. Edmodo is used by teachers to communicate with parents about student assignments, grades and answer questions.

Professional Learning Communities are an effective way for teachers to analyze student data collected by formative assessments and benchmark assessments done by the schools.

School also use their website to inform parents of instructional processes and keep them up to date with the latest data on all schools.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal thoroughly disclosed the level of transparency of the salaries of the administration, staff, and teachers of the district. Actual salaries can be easily found online of the actual salary by employee or school..

Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level were not discussed in the proposal.

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

10

6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Pitt County uses technology as one of the platforms for success in the individualized learning environments for students and teachers in its application. In attachment B 3-1 Robert T. Sonnenberg, In-House Counsel for Pitt County Schools states that technology policies were update to, "provide more flexible use of internet resources by both the students and staff while still protecting students from inappropriate internet material...provide more flexibility to students. Access to appropriate school monitored social media sites are now allowed as well as use of personally owned devices...continue toward its goal of one-to-one personalized learning."

The letter from the SEA states that their goals and activities strongly align with the state's READY remodeling agenda so that the district's plan does not interfere with the state's plan. The state does not go further than that due to the fact that they have other applicants.

no specific LEA policies allowing for school autonomy.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The process of engaging the stakeholders was a seamless fit. Using the School Improvement advisory councils at each school, the district is sure to have a good representation of all stakeholders. PTA Councils comprised of the leadership from each school is also a natural fit. Again a good representation with parents assured of being well represented. The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council would make sure students are represented. The Diversity Task Force represented the subgroups and the community at large.

Many letters of support were in the packet from the mayors of the cities and the colleges. The letters of support lacking were from the parent support groups, for instance, the PTAs or School Improvement Councils.

The preparation for the proposal was explained, but how the feedback was incorporated was not clearly explained.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Pitt County used North Carolina's RTTT funding to prepare its district's infrastructure with enough bandwidth for each student to access the internet at the same time as it prepares itself for its 1:1 device initiative and readiness for personalized learning environments. The county used Title I and II funds to place instructional coaches in every K-12 school to help roll out the Common Core Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards. The district also increased its staff to include curriculum coaches in ELA, math, social studies, science, and art. Last year the Teacher Leader Cohort model was initiated.

In order for Pitt County to make their plan work, they implemented 1:1 technology devices for grades 3-5 in one school identified as low performing with a technology facilitator to train and work in collaboration with the instructional coach and to help provide professional development and instructional support. The proposal is to promote personalized instruction. Also, three SIG high schools purchased 1 million dollars' worth of iPads to increase student aces during class time. This proposal expands the 1:1 technology at one school to K-12 approach. Pitt County had the foresight to increase the technology department by one additional to work on infrastructure issues.

The county was selected by the Governor to implement Read 3D for all K-3 students last year which the county is continuing. The proposal will expand the program to K-8 along with their TLC model thereby providing teachers to observe effective strategies with in the school.

The proposal did not identify timelines, deliverables and responsible parties.

The district was incomplete on addressing their analysis of needs and gaps.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Pitt County has a comprehensive plan for improving teaching and learning for students in grades K-12 by ensuring a curriculum that is rigorous and relevant and personalizing each student's learning environment in order to make each student college and career ready.

Points of the plans are as follows:

- All Grade students will have a Daily Reading Intervention Model (DRIM) based on formative and summative assessments integrated with the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading to create a personalized reading curriculum
- STEAM begins in grades K-3 to learn the basics; 4-8 for exploration and to create their electronic portfolio (Digital Backpack) which has assessments of growth and learning and STEAM curriculum choices; 9-12 backpacks are refined with projects on their way to being career and college ready
- Teacher effectiveness is a concern. Their plan is to take a proven highly effective teacher, who mentors a beginning teacher and two interns from the local university and will facilitate these classrooms. The highly effective teacher creates a team by co-teaching, co-planning, and co- assessing all students. The plan has proven t to be highly effective. The problem to address is maintaining the interns and beginning teachers.
- Transitioning from a teacher centered to a more student centered class takes some time, but with 1:1 computers the students will have the tools to facilitate personalizing their own learning environment.
- All students' Body Mass Index will be a measurable goal for a healthier life in the district. More physical education at grade levels K-9 is required.

Parent support is vital. During the past, the county established a goal of reaching out to the parents at least two family events per year. All schools must meet or exceed this goal this year and each teacher at all schools must meet or exceed this goal for each of their student's parents this year. As students have the 1:1 program the communication with parents increases.

Unclear was a timeline for the goals and persons responsible for implementing al activities.

Not in this section, but in an earlier one a new technology person from the district was hired to train the students and staff on the 1:1 technology program.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The detailed plan by Pitt County for teaching and learning has three components (Teacher Leader Cohorts, STEAM, 1:1 Technology) to increase capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. Each of the three employs the use of professional learning communities to support their efforts to meet students' needs and adapt content and instruction.

The plan's components support personalized learning environments and strategies that meet student's academic needs. Through the Teacher leader cohort, teachers are able to adapt content and instruction to meet students' needs because of frequent student measurement and assessment. Digital backpacks will allow students to chart growth, record success, take benchmark tests and online assessments, and show personalized learning plan.

Annual TechFest, is professional development that highlights effective methods for integrating technology into curriculum that maximized student learning.

The plan did not address issues of teachers and administrators evaluation systems.

The Teacher Leader Cohort Model is a unique model of increasing the number of students who receive instruction from high-qualified, highly effective teachers in hard to staff schools.

The plan itself does not have the activities and rationale for the activities, timelines, deliverables, or persons responsible for the activities.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pitt County provides sufficient evidence that the central office provides support to the schools. Schools receive support from Assistant Superintendents. Support is provided to schools on a regular basis from Curriculum Coordinators and Curriculum Resource Specialist in the areas of math, reading and language arts, second language, exception children programs, gifted education, media, CTE, and instructional technology support.</p> <p>School autonomy is twofold in Pitt County. For those schools who are making sufficient student progress and meet state and federal guidelines, the district grants more autonomy. For those districts who are not making sufficient progress, the district take a more hands on approach.</p> <p>The district will be able to award credit without “logging in” all the hours with a new educational initiative NC Department of Public Instruction has drafted titled, “Credit by Demonstrated Master.” Pitt County will participate in the pilot in SY 13-14. Students will demonstrate mastery by taking multi-phased assessments without having to sit the course.</p> <p>Gifted learner will be provided mastery of coursework to meet their specific needs. Exceptional Children and English Language Learners will have practices that, “take into consideration multiple modalities of learning, multiple entry points, explicit instructional practices, and the use of technology for instructional support and assessment.”</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The infrastructure in Pitt County is very sound. As noted earlier the system in the county allows each student to access the internet at the same time. Their plan is to utilize technology, regardless of income, that will assists students in the 21st century such as, Smart Boards, assistive devices, iPods, lap tops, tablets and iPads.</p> <p>Each of the schools provides students access to online programs such as: digital video streaming, electronic encyclopedia databases, and core content for remediation and acceleration purposes.</p> <p>The district is providing technical support to the students, staff, and schools. Many new positions were created to accommodate managing the hardware and software issues that come with computers and a fully functioning wireless network in each of its 36 schools. The district also hired media coordinators at each school to support technology and instruction for student and teacher needs. Technology specialist are also employed at the district level to provide support to schools and the community centers for parents and the community at large. CTE courses in computer repair and maintenance were added at the high school because of the high job demand. Technical support for teachers is also provided over the summer.</p> <p>The proposal does not address exportable data options for parents and students or many technology supports for parents ond community members.</p> <p>In the plan, Pitt County did not mention the interoperable data systems because it is in the bid process in NC as mentioned earlier.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pitt County's personalized learning experience strategy for continuous improvement for all students is a unique one. Its foundation is a STEAM framework for curriculum with 1:1 technology built in. As students pass into the 4th grade, they receive Digital Backpacks to enter their student work, accomplishments, research, assessments, and eventually college- and career-readiness skills. As the student enters 9th, the focus is world, American, and British literature, and focusing on courses that prepare them for college and career readiness. Technology will enhance and accelerate students' growth. The plan's STEAM K-12 initiative and Digital Backpack 4-12 plus the 1:1 technology offer a unique way for students to learn and continuously improve.</p> <p>Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is the method through which the above plan will occur. In PLCs, teachers create high quality assessments and lessons, performance task, analyze student and teacher performance data. In a PLC professional development can occur on various needs as the data reveals. Professional development will also occur at the district level.</p> <p>Assessments will be given to provide regular feedback at each school. Students and parents will be able to view the results in PowerSchool. PowerSchool provides real time data to parents about grades, assessments and transcripts.</p> <p>Pitt County provides a web site with valuable information to parents and other stakeholder, including RTTD information.</p> <p>More examples of publically sharing information on the quality of its investments funded would have enhanced the strategies.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strategies for internal stake holders provides for consistent and focused communication. External communication is limited. Examples of external communication are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student report cards will inform parents of student progress <p>Although in the last section, with PowerSchool, parents will be able to view student progress daily and the website will inform the stakeholders of the RTTD information at any given time.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Pitt County's proposal has ambitious yet achievable goals. The rationale is given for the goals. Many of the goals coincide with NC ESEA waiver, NC General Assembly legislation, or from STEAM or one of their other proposed initiatives. The goals are rigorous.</p> <p>The proposal again relays how and why the goals are addressed, but lacking is the reason how they will review and improve the goals over time if needed.</p> <p>There is no subgroup for students with disabilities in the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All goals for effective or highly effective teachers and principals of students in math and reading • Graduation rate • K-3 Math • FAFSA • College and career-readiness (b) 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pitt County put forth a few evaluations of the strategies in proposal, but evidence is lack if it is enough to determine the effectiveness of the investments without further evaluation. An external evaluator will review the assessment plans of the interns in the Teacher Leader Cohort Model Classroom. The 1:1 Technology will be evaluated at the district level to see if</p>		

student understand the technology effectively.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budge narrative and tables provides details of all funds that support the budget. Funds that are used to support the programs were included, i.e., NC RTTT, DCT, and state and local funds. The budgets were divided up into the different project to clearly identify the budgets needed to the finance each project. Detailed rationales were provided for the expenditure and reasons for each need. Explanations were also provided of the expenditure for the other funding source.</p> <p>It is unclear if some of the funds were to be used as a one-time investment versus those that would be used for ongoing operational costs</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pitt County clear defines the funding to be used by breaking down the budget narrative into the four projects but the sustainability is not strongly supported. The 1:1 Technology Initiative includes 17.4 million dollars of the budget. Thirteen point four million dollars of the budget is for instructional devices such as interactive learning boards, laptops, and tablets. The school district has already spent \$250,000 on tablets and on million dollars on laptops. The grand will add four technology positions for support for the system. The district already employs tem with state and local dollars. The grant will also add four instructional technology positions for support directly to instructional staff. The grant includes 2.5 million dollars for professional development in training personnel in integrating technology. The district has already spent one million in RTTT funds for the same purpose. For the 1:1 technology program to be sustained the district will depend upon state and local funding, economic conditions and future State and Federal legislation.</p> <p>STEAM represents three million dollars of the budget. It will be used with seven million dollars of CTE dollars and \$200,000 business partnership dollars. As students are interested in the courses and the numbers rise, increase in the funding also rises to produce sustainability.</p> <p>Teacher Leader Cohort Model which focuses on highly effective teachers and leaders is a total of 9.1 million dollars. State RTTT budget has invested \$500,000 in this endeavor. And in the last four years, ECU and Pitt County have invested approximately one million dollars to make the system viable. The project will nurture beginning teachers, create teacher leaders, support teacher interns, and reduce high teacher turnover rate. The budget includes the salary of approximately 53 instructionally proven teacher professionals for each of the four years of the grant. Again, sustainability will rely upon economic conditions, future legislation, and state and local budgets.</p> <p>Program administration is approximately \$488,000 to oversee all aspects of the grand and one office support personnel.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pitt County's Competitive Preference Priority is a innovatively sound approach that integrates the school district's resources with that of the Boys and Girls Club, Building Hope Community Life Center, The East Carolina University, Intergenerational Community Center, Greenville Police Department, Pitt County Sheriff's Department, and the United Way of Pitt County. The 5th grade students before entering the 6th grade are chosen based on attendance, behavior, and course performance.</p> <p>The proposal gives a detailed account of the partnership, how it was formed, and its success thus far. The aims also fall right in with helping Pitt County to support its plan in raising student achievement because they have integrated education in with</p>		

the social and emotional goals from the beginning.

The partnership has already been tracking and aggregating the results. The partnership has involved families of all the students and the use of technology, again, one of the goals in Priority One.

The tracking however up to this point did not involve students with disabilities or English language learners or by race or ethnicity, but does in the proposal.

The program continues throughout the school year, not only during the summer.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Priority One is met through the plan through the following: by expanding student access to the most effective educator in the Teacher Leader Cohort Model Classroom		

Total	210	123
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