



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0501MS-1 for Tupelo Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The comprehensive and coherent reform vision of the district is to “once again serve its students and community with the tradition of excellence”. There is little evidence that the project adequately addresses the vision by showing how project approach addresses the reform that is needed. There is also reference to it being a flagship in public education, without any articulation of what that means.</p> <p>There is a goal statement that the district will accelerate achievement in four of five newly implemented district-wide goals, but there is no clear description of how it would address the four core educational assurance areas or articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.</p> <p>The applicant addresses the RTT goals, which are restated as part of its application and its attempt to use the RACE is On project to accelerate achievement using newly implemented district wide goals shows that the district is committed to educational improvement. However, when it proposed to: 1) increase student achievement across the district, 2) improve, develop, and retain human capital, 3) improve internal and external communications, and 4) increase management effectiveness and efficiency, through four essential projects, it addresses a commitment to the improvement of instruction rather than the reform of the structure system. Its proposal is for instructional improvement and no a reform project.</p> <p>The applicant makes a strong effort to show how it will refocus public education on providing additional school services for parents and children from birth through kindergarten. The proposed program would lend significant strength to the district's ability to improve instruction by preparing children for school. However, this seems to be an extension of state legal requirements for public education. The commitment of the applicant to provide education beyond what the state requires opens the door to a new long-term obligation by the district's to begin early childhood services in a center currently offering day care and pre-school education. The ability to adequately do this for the long term is not supported. Just the fact that the project will utilize facilities serving students aged birth to three would require a description of how the district will address day-care accommodations and services.</p> <p>The applicant does not adequately address the development of personalized learning differentiated instruction. Rather it speaks of intervention and computer-based programs to assist teachers with their classroom instruction as the model of personalized learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified 12 schools by name and grade levels.</p> <p>The applicant omitted the process by which all schools were included in the project.</p> <p>A total number of students identified and participating students and educators were included; however, the applicant omitted showing which schools are high need and if all participating schools have the poverty level indicated for the entire district.</p> <p>The applicant omitted an assurance that the participating schools meet the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>The applicant omitted including data showing which of the participating students are high-need students and if eligible students are assigned to all participating educators.</p>		

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

There is evidence that the early childhood program for students from birth to age 3 is an expansion of the existing 4 year-old program. Although the expansion is laudable for helping parents prepare their children for school, there is no evidence that the applicant will or can target eligible students. Without targeted services, the program could widen the gap between lower-income high-need children and their higher income peers, because there is nothing that shows how the services would be targeted for families of the eligible group.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, for the district to add services for students ranging from birth to age 4, there is no documentation provided related to how the applicant will address the state requirements for day-care services for young children or how the modifications to the mentioned facility could accommodate a program that serves eligible pre-school age children.

There is evidence that some of the college and career readiness services proposed for the high school could be helpful; however, there is no evidence that the supplemental services, such as graduation coaches could reform what current resources, such as counselors, already offer.

Personalized learning, as described, includes data-driven programs that assist teachers in individualizing learning, which are supplements to whole group and flexible small group instruction supplemented with remediation or enrichment through computer programs such as Classworks and enVisionMATH. There is no evidence that the proposed classroom instruction is personalized rather than by offering a traditional approach supplemented with resource materials.

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

The stated goals in Appendix A - 1. Increase student achievement across the District, 2. Provide a safe and orderly environment in all schools, 3. Improve, develop and retain human capital, 4. Improve internal and external communication, and 5. Increase management effectiveness and efficiency do address (a) increasing student achievement but does not specify the use of specific proficiency assessments.

There are no goals (or indicators) addressing decreasing achievement gaps.

There are indicators (not Goals) that address (c) graduation rates.

There are no goals addressing college enrollment.

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	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is stated evidence that there will be significant improvement in the upper elementary and middle school grades over two years.

There is evidence that the project will show improvement in the graduation rate and an increase in the number of advanced courses offered.

It describes the increase in the number of programs designed to improve instruction including teacher training and development. It also addresses how it makes performance data available to parents and students.

It does not address closing achievement gaps or how it is developing methods to address instruction in persistently low performing schools. It also only speaks to a two year gain.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes an adequate statement that it meets the accreditation requirements of the Mississippi Department of Education. It also adequately describes how State law governs how the district allocates and makes public all district funds.</p> <p>It does not clearly address the Census Bureau's classification requirements nor whether it publishes personnel salaries at various levels.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence that the Mississippi legislature, by passing State Policy 4300, requires differentiation and targeted interventions for struggling students, giving school districts the autonomy to adopt or create an instructional model that complements and enhances the state required intervention model. The applicant provides a good description about how it is creating a district-wide model that addresses the state requirements, with evidence that teachers will be trained to carry them out.</p> <p>How the early childhood services program (birth to age 3) meets state regulatory requirements is not adequately addressed. There is no mention of what the different requirements are for day-care and what accommodations are needed for children who are too young to walk. Facilities requirements for children younger than school age are different than requirements for school facilities in most states. There is no data included that addresses these issues.</p> <p>The applicant does not adequately describe the meaning of the statement: "TPSD has considerable autonomy under the state's requirements in its implementation of personalized learning environments." There is no data showing how the proposed project complements the three-tiered intervention model required by the state.</p> <p>Although the applicant said that it has autonomy to design the curriculum and pacing guides, there is no data showing how the curriculum is different or if it is designed to be carried out in personalized learning environments.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The statement that it has been meeting with councils, forums and teams was adequately addressed. Surveys of students and teachers offer a clear picture of the needs of the applicant.</p> <p>There is a good description showing that there is parent and teacher support for programs and services included in the application.</p> <p>A description about how the different groups were directly involved in the development of the proposal or what changes were included because of their input was not adequately addressed.</p> <p>There were a substantial number of letters of support from Universities, colleges, mayors and the Mississippi Department of Education but none from parent organizations, advocacy groups, or other community based organizations.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is sufficient documented evidence that a significant discrepancy exists among different racial groups in core subjects and a need for services. There is also sufficient information showing a discrepancy among different racial groups taking ACT and the need for preparing students to take the test.</p> <p>There is no analysis shown that relates the proposed personalized services and their ability to address these discrepancies.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed series of programs designed to enhance learning adequately address academic problems while helping children learn better. The services such as Response to Intervention (RTI) as a prescriptive means to help struggling students academically was shown as a good approach to improving performance.

Many of the proposed programs help groups of students become better prepared and/or ready for college. Many are engaging and can be used for personalized learning.

Project activities, as described, do not include sufficient evidence that it will be used as part of a system-wide reform effort.

There is little evidence that when supplemental funding stops, the model will continue.

There is little mention or evidence related to how the early childhood program is connected to the K-12 proposed programs.

The proposal does not show how the combination of the supplemental services and program components fit together to better prepare students for college.

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

The applicant does not offer a high-quality reform plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The early child component offers little evidence that the services are being designed to prepare future K-12 students for a personalized learning environment. Rather, it shows a district commitment to expand services to all pre-school children and their families. If successful, the evidence shows that participating children (low and higher income families) may be ready for school, regardless of the type of education offered.

The proposed project for K-12 students is available to all students with evidence that the services provided would be supplemental to a traditional approach rather than part of a new one designed to reform the structure currently in place. The personalized instructional environment was described as one offering group and individualized instruction complemented with additional resources. The program is one that is similar to the current traditional approach generally offered in schools. The application showed evidence that 90% of the core teachers in the district are rated as highly effective.

There is a component called PD360, which is a good tool to offer in-house professional development. It includes video content designed to help teachers understand stated standards and college readiness. It also will be used as part of an evaluation tool. They offer substantial benefits for helping teachers become better instructors.

There is good supportive evidence that other teacher evaluation and support components including M-STAR, Net Network combined with existing professional development help teachers to be better instructors.

There is little supporting evidence that teachers and principals participating in the proposed components: (a) will or have engaged in training, and in professional teams or communities that supports their individual and collective capacity.

There is little supporting evidence that teachers and principals participating in the proposed program will be engaged in training that : (i) supports the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

There is very little evidence that teachers and principals participating in the proposed components engage or will be engaged in training that: (ii) adapts content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches

There is little evidence that teachers and principals participating in the proposed components engage or will be engaged in training that: (iii) measures student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and uses data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

There is some evidence that teachers and principals participating in the proposed components engage or will be engaged in training that: (iv) improves teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the teacher and principal M-STAR evaluation system that includes frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

There is limited information in the application related to: (b) how participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements

(as defined in this notice).

There is no data showing how educators can use: (i) actionable information that helps them identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests.

There is no evidence showing that the applicant identified (ii) high-quality learning resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready or college- and career-ready graduation requirements or how they identify the tools to create and share new resources.

There is no substantive information about the (iii) processes and tools used to match student needs or how the district will provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the requested resources in meeting student needs.

There is no data showing how(c) all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have or will have appropriate training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (or college- and career-ready graduation requirements).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is a good description about how it is: (a) organizing central office to provide support and services to all participating schools. It is a good use of a leadership team and partnerships that are designed to facilitate personalized learning.</p> <p>There is an adequate description about how the applicant facilitates personalized learning by: (b) providing school leadership teams in participating schools 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. The organizational structure is strengthened by principals have flexibility in the areas of school organization, staffing decisions, curriculum, and budgeting including adjusting class schedules to allow additional time for student learning as well as for teachers to collaborate.</p> <p>The proposal adequately speaks to providing flexibility to special student populations but provides no evidence that there are policies or practices that (c) gives all students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, but does not offer a clear indication of the amount of time spent on a topic.</p> <p>There is limited discussion of a high-quality plan designed to (d) give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways or (e) provide the learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is an adequate description about the use of technology including desktops, laptops and iPads for Pre-K-5 students. Students in upper grade are allowed to take laptops home. Although the application did not include evidence that all eligible students participate, the availability shows strength in program infrastructure.</p> <p>There is an adequate description of the technology used in the classrooms and the programs available that lends additional support to the strength of available electronic resources.</p> <p>There is evidence that the use of the Haiku Learning Management system allows (a) all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders to have access to content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the program.</p> <p>There is evidence that the use of the School Interoperability Framework (SIF) shows that (b) students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support provided through a range of strategies and c) offer information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.</p> <p>The SIF, as described (d) allows the district and schools to use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and a system instructional improvement data.</p>		

There are no weaknesses shown related to questions of infrastructure.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) used by the district is a cyclical model is an appropriate planning model that can be used for continuous improvement at the district, school and classroom levels. The strategy described in the application for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward meeting goals set for the district.</p> <p>There is little evidence that the applicant has developed a strategy that addresses how the project will monitor, measure the project's progress, and how it proposes to publicly share information on the quality of the project.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Included are appropriate means for making adjustments and revisions to its project by using periodic internal and external surveys, school open houses, parent/teacher data meetings, its main website, school websites, daily/weekly school e-newsletters, the Superintendent's community presentations to business, civic and faith-based organizations and The community's local newspaper called The Daily Journal.</p> <p>The district provides a good strategy for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through the Council of Excellence, a committee of community members, students, alumni, teachers and parents.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Included are adequate data in Appendix F showing achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures.</p> <p>There was an insufficient description about the (a) rationale for selecting that measure; (b) how the measure provides rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action regarding the project's implementation success or areas of concern; and (c) how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.</p> <p>Included were appropriate data related to the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal rated as highly effective; the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher and principal are rated as effective.</p> <p>Included were appropriate data related to the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal rated as highly effective; the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher and principal are rated as effective; the number of students Proficient or Advanced on the MCT2 and SATP2 State Assessments.</p> <p>Also included were data related to numbers who were proficient or advanced on the Terra Nova test for grades 1-2: data on Early Prevention of School Failure; post-test scores showing students achieving 50% or higher on the assessment; and indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Data were included showing the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator; the number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the free application for federal student aid (FASA) form; and the percentage of students who were proficient or advanced on the state end of year assessments.</p> <p>There was no evidence that the applicant will propose a grade-appropriate academic leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan; and at a grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The is an adequate description about the use of teams to evaluate its project using Observation 360 as the tool.

There is no discussion about how the applicant proposes to evaluate the activities funded by the project, including professional development and the activities that employ technology, productively, staff, money, and other resources proposed to improve results, including proposed strategies such as improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and the proposed modified organizational structure.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The justifies its use of a combination of state and local funds but did not differentiate how the different funds (a) will be used to support the project.

There is substantial evidence that the project has (ii) identified the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during but not after the grant period, as they were described in the proposed budget and budget narrative.

The applicant provides a (i) full description of the use of Federal funds that it will use to support the implementation of the proposal, but does not include the proposed use of total revenues from all sources.

The costs proposed were not justifiable as (b) reasonable for the program proposed but and sufficient to fully support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal; and

There is little evidence that the funds used will (c) clearly provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities as part of the budget narrative.

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

Interaction among community and local organizations to develop a strategy for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant was not clearly described. The proposal adequately shows the difficulty of using local and state funds to sustain the project.

There is sufficient evidence of support from local government leaders but long-term financial support is not rationalized. There is no plan included for a budget proposed for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not respond to the competitive priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

There is a justifiable series of supplemental services requested that are designed to improve instruction within the schools of the district. The need was adequately addressed and the use of the personalization of services and tools that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements was justified.

There was a justifiable need for the proposed program that is designed to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by addressing the academic needs of every student. The proposal did adequately discuss the desire to increase the effectiveness of teachers and the need to expand student access to the most effective educators.

However, the proposal did not show any evidence that the proposed services will decrease achievement gaps across student groups or significantly increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

There was little evidence that the project would reform the applicant's current approach to learning by coherently and comprehensively addressing how it will build on the core educational areas through the creation of new or realigned learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching.

Total	210	116
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0501MS-2 for Tupelo Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

TPSD presents a case that builds on the defined four core educational assurance areas: standards that support college and career readiness, use of data to measure growth and success, methods to develop highly effective teachers and principals, and implement differentiated instruction to close achievement gaps. While they have specified the goal of closing achievement gaps, it is unclear how they intend to turn around lowest achieving schools.

- The district has already shown a commitment to turning around its schools by implementing goals that have improved its academic rating from "Academic Watch/D" to "High Performing/B" as defined by MDE state standards.
- The district's proposal "The RACE is On" describes four district goals "newly implemented": increase student achievement; improve and retain human capital; improve district and community communication; increase effectiveness and efficiency.
- The district specifies college and career readiness programs and enhancement of differentiated instruction to address the goals of accelerating student achievement.
- The district specifies differentiated instruction to deepen student learning and data systems to inform student learning.
- The district specifies early childhood and elementary initiatives, college/career readiness programs, differentiated instruction, and data and evaluation systems to address the goal of increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

While the applicant states goals, the articulation of a vision is minimal, leaving the reviewer (and the community) to question how the district intends to reform its schools rather than merely implement programs that will boost student performance.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district's proposal specifies an ambitious reform program that

- a. is already in effect by school leadership and supported by the "district's commitment to equity;"
- b. will include all 12 of its schools and is/will be further implemented in all subject areas, including the 4 core areas as well as career and early-childhood training;
- c. will include all 7521 students, 61.61% from low-income families, 568 teachers, and all future students.

While the proposal states the *percentage* of low-income families in the district, it does not state the number of low-income families or the number of high-need students the proposal will include. In a later section, the proposal states there are 287 students currently being served in its Early Childhood Education Center and the The RACE is On will help provide for 2 more classrooms, approximately 40 more students.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

TPSD's The RACE is On proposal will serve all students and all schools in the district.

The RACE is On includes a plan that aims to become a "cohesive school system rather than a system of schools" and details 4 key projects that provide ambitious and achievable goals to increase student learning through specific tools, objectives, and initiatives:

1. Early and Elementary Education Initiatives: focuses on kindergarten-readiness through
 - Early Childhood Education Centers that currently serve 287 students out of ~600, with the goal of expanding to 2 more classrooms and 40 more pre-K students in order to serve the long-term goal of decreasing drop-out rates and increasing graduation rates, thereby reducing poverty rates and increasing the quality of life for its community members;
 - Early Beginnings, a community resource center to help meet the needs of the community by providing parents with media, training, resources, and outreach to teach their children. PAT educators will be hired and assigned to families for home visits, group meetings, developmental & health screenings, and other community outreach to day-cares and pre-schools to better reach/serve the entire community
 - Tupelo Reads, a program instituted by the mayor wherein each mother of a newborn receives a children's book; and The RACE is On will provide one quality book each month for pre-K through 2nd graders to motivate and encourage literacy in every household.
2. College and Career Readiness: focuses on retention and graduation through
 - Graduation Coaches who serve as interventionists for at-risk students
 - Dual Enrollment courses offered at THS through the local community college for students wishing to earn college credits before graduation
 - GED programs and instructors that have been restructured to serve a greater number of "last resort" at-risk students
3. Differentiated Instruction: focuses on improving student learning outcomes through
 - Interventionists: expanding its overstressed RTI and hiring additional interventionists to reduce staff to student ratio. In one place, the proposal calls for hiring 21 interventionists to bring ratio from 1:49 to 1:18; however, in another section, the proposal asks for 40 interventionists to bring the ratio to 1:12.
 - Digital Tools: 1:1 laptop initiative for students 6-12, media centers in pre-K through 5; Reading Street curriculum, Classworks to individualize K-8 math and reading learning; K-6 EnVisionMATH; and refreshing online and media tools throughout the proposal period and beyond.
4. Data and Evaluation Systems: focuses on professional learning communities and teacher observation, evaluation, and support through
 - PD360 and MStar: online professional development library that allows for collaboration within district and across the nation; MStar is the state's teacher assessment rubric
 - Common Assessments given to students at regular intervals to benchmark and gauge student learning
 - Next Network: peer networking tool used to aid in the transition to CCSS by aligning current state assessments with CCSS.

TPSD identifies Dr. John Kotter's 8-Step model for change and the message of improving student learning outcomes is

conveyed throughout the community, ensuring transparency at every level of decision-making for all stakeholders. The proposal is lacking in explanation about Kotter's 8-Step model and how it is employed as a theory or model of change or reform.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

TPSD provided an extensive table illustrating goal areas, subgroups, and baseline year percentages with achievable annual goals for each core subject area and within subgroups. TPSD uses the state's existing, approved targets and goals.

a) table provides each core area and grade level baselines for 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, offering both overall and subgroup percentages. Each year of the proposal grant period anticipates a 1%-5% growth and includes the 2016-17 post-grant year that continues showing 1-5% growth on summative assessments for each core area and subgroup. The proposal's vision and interventions indicate a 1-5% growth in each area and are positive, achievable and, in the cases of 4-5% growth, ambitious goals.

b) table provides a group with highest proficient/advanced rating on state summative assessments (Asian subgroup) as the comparison group for all other subgroups to indicate current achievement gaps and to project decreasing gap percentages. Each year offered for each subject area, grade, and subpopulation anticipates a 1-5% decrease in achievement gaps. These modest gains appear to be achievable, although not ambitious, when compared to the decrease in achievement gaps between the optional SY 2010-11 and 2011-12, which showed a 20+% decrease in most cases. While a 20+% decrease is likely not sustainable each year, it appears that the proposal's early intervention plans and differentiated learning tools and data will ensure the more steady, stable, and sustainable 1-5% annual gains in achievement.

c) a table provides graduation rates for SY 2010-11 and 2011-12 and indicates a 1% overall growth in graduation rate each year, including the year 5 post-grant year. It appears more ambitious gains of 2% for subgroups "black" and "ED" are expected, while 5% gains are expected each year for subgroup "SPED." Given the proposal's vision for college and career readiness and differentiated learning tools and data, it is feasible that such growth is likely and achievable.

d) table provides college enrollment rates for SY 2010-11 and 2011-12 and indicates less than 1% growth overall for each school year through the post-grant period. Within subgroups, a full 1% growth is expected each year. Based on the college and career readiness initiatives offered by TPSD and at THS, including GED, Dual Enrollment, and AP credit, 1% growth in each subgroup is achievable, although with the initiatives the proposal call for, it may not be considered ambitious. Certainly after the early childhood interventions proposed are implemented and those children reach high school, 1% growth is inappropriate and insufficient.

e) optional postsecondary degree attainment not given.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Since 2009, TPSD has shown a clear record of improvement according to state ratings. District-wide, they have gone from Academic Watch/D rating to High Performing/B rating in the last four years, placing them 43rd out of 150 districts state-wide.

a) A majority of their success have been in grades 3-8 with 5 of the 7 eligible schools having High Performing status, and 4 of the schools having received the National Blue Ribbon School Award. TPSD's proposal offers a description of the initiative in 2002 at Pierce Street Elementary, a school with high percentage of ED students, to integrate the arts in core subject areas through Whole Schools Initiative (a USDE approved school reform model). It has increased student achievement and learning by improving the school's academic rating to an "A" rating in 2008-09. The clear success shown at PSE has led the district to implement the project in its 10 other elementary and 1 middle school.

Additionally, the middle school has introduced a project called RIDES and TRAC, in conjunction with MDOT, to encourage study in science, math, technology, and engineering. Student gains in math and science are cited as a result of this hands-on program and students are successfully competing at the national level in bridge building championships. The program has now extended to PSE.

The Early Childhood Education Center has also shows promising results from students who were offered Pre-K services. Results on state tests show these students scored an average of 7.44 scale points higher than the state average.

While TPSD clearly demonstrates achievement and success in student learning outcomes at the K-6/8 grades, no mention is made of the district's only high school's academic rating, although graduation rates increased or held static. In 2008, the graduation rate was 72.2% whereas in 2012 it was 74.6%; however, an earlier section stated the 2010 grad rate was 70%, 2011 was 74.6%, and 2012 was 72.4%, all of which were nominally lower than the state grad rates. Additionally, TPSD recognizes a more significant discrepancy in graduation rates among subpopulations. For college enrollment, 2008 graduates had a 71% matriculation into college/post-secondary education, whereas in 2012, 78.1% matriculated, which shows a significant gain in 4 years.

b) TPSD does not directly identify its lowest-achieving/performing schools, and there is a lack of data provided for THS's rating. Steps taken to increase achievement and student investment in graduation and post-secondary education at THS include offering 16 AP courses and housing both recognized athletic and performing and visual arts programs to students. The 2012 graduating class received \$4.5 million in scholarships and acceptance into some of the nation's more prestigious universities. Moreover, in the last 6 years, THS has had 58 National Merit Semi-Finalists and received a Cum Laude Society. However, the accolades appear to be inconsistent with a 72.4% (or 74.6%) graduation rate and the discrepancy among subgroups is not accounted for in these recent achievements; yet, the reforms called for in The RACE is On include offering GED programs, Dual Enrollment, and interventions that could potentially benefit subpopulations at THS.

c) the district uses common assessments to collect data, which is discussed on a monthly basis with teachers and administration to make adjustments in instruction. Performance data is available to all stakeholders through data management systems (for teachers and admin) and online learning systems that allow parents and students to stay informed about and involved in students' educations and have interactive features that encourage parent and student participation. Parents have many options when it comes to participating in their child's learning experiences, such as student-teacher conferences, common core nights, online tools to check student grades, assignments, attendance, progress, etc. Teachers are trained to discern data in meaningful ways that inform and improve instruction, as well as being trained to discuss student data with parents to inform and improve participation and instruction.

While these programs and electronic resources are invaluable to the teachers, administrators, and involved parents/students, it is unclear how the district is approaching and involving 1) grade 6-12 parents/students who do not have access to the internet at home or K-5 parents/students who do not have access to computers or internet at home, and/or 2) are disinterested/uninvolved with the school system and their child's education, although the application does state elsewhere that school and district newsletters are mailed to students' homes and the newspaper regularly publishes information about the schools.

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

5

4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Actual personnel salaries for all employees listed under (a) through (d) above are not specifically given in this application. However, strong evidence of transparency exists in TPSD to make its budget and expenditures known to citizens, personnel, and state agencies.

A public budget hearing is held one week prior to adoption, and the local newspaper advertises the date, time, and place for the hearing.

A summary of the adopted budget is published in the local newspaper, provided to the Lee County Board of Supervisors, the MDE, and is immediately posted on the district website under District Documents.

Additionally, monthly financial statements are presented to the Board of Trustees at open meetings, and the district has annual audits of financial statements by MS state auditor's office or private CPA offices. Audits are also posted on MS State Auditor's Website.

Financial information is also provided to MDE for the State Superintendent's Annual Report and to the National Center for Education Statistics, the USDE, Civil Rights Data Collection.

This information is also available online by each school in the district.

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

10

6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

While MS state has implemented several measures that encourage reform, the state gives individual districts significant autonomy to implement state requirements.

The state adopted the CCSS and joined PARCC as a participating state. TPSD has the autonomy to create a curriculum, pacing guides, and assessment tools to integrate and implement the CCSS into its instruction, and in fact has already begun this project.

The state mandated a 3 Tier Intervention Model that requires differentiation and targeted interventions, and TPSD has the autonomy to adopt or create instructional models that complement the intervention model. However, a weakness that is not clearly addressed by the applicant is how these state-mandated interventions affect the manner in which a student progresses. It is unclear whether the state-required interventions still require students to advance according to age rather than proficiency level, thereby straining the autonomy the schools have in implementing structures and reform measures that would benefit students with the highest needs.

Also, it is unclear whether the state intervenes in schools that show no progress or are low-achieving by taking over the administration of a school; at this time, TPSD shows clear success which lends itself to significant autonomy from the state in implementing strategies and instructional models.

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

TPSD demonstrates evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of The RACE is On, although it provides ambiguous evidence of support from parents/community in general.

a) a district Teacher's Advisory Council, the Parent Forum, and the Principal's Team met on a regular basis to discuss the district's goal of increasing student achievement. A new superintendent has also facilitated discussions about critical issues with families, teachers, administrators, students, and community members. It is not clear how the councils, forums, and teams were put together and who comprises each of these groups. However, input from these groups has resulted in the implementation of The RACE is On programs such as PD360, Reading Street, and Classworks. A need for early learning and high school resources has also been identified in these groups.

Additionally, a grassroots group called the Committee of 200 first instigated and spurred the need to expand the ECEC. However, general parent/community response is ambiguous at best when the district sent a survey to parents asking several questions regarding the education and services students were receiving in TPSD. They gave a window of 8 days to respond. Of more than 7500 students and 35000 citizens, only 104 parent surveys were returned. It is unclear whether parents are uninterested, were not given enough time to reasonably consider and respond, or if only certain families/parents were targeted.

Students were also asked to respond to 2 questions regarding how well their educational needs were met and how their experience could be improved. A general statement describing student responses were offered, but no specific examples of these responses were offered.

a.ii) 71% of the district's teachers were surveyed regarding student needs and their support of programs called for in the proposal. Over half of the teachers saw a need for early childhood intervention steps as outlined in The RACE is On, interventions called for in K-8 and graduation coaches, and there is very high support of the programs Reading Street and Classworks used in the proposal. It is unclear whether only 71% of the teachers were surveyed or if all 568 teachers were given the survey and only 71% responded. They were given a 9 day period from September 24-October 3 to respond.

b) There are many letters of support from all arenas, including: the city mayor, the community college, CREATE community foundation, US Senator Thad Cochran, Mississippi State University, and MDE. Letters are included in application.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The RACE is on recognizes that the CCSS will be fully implemented in Fall 2014 and has begun taking measurable steps to incorporate these standards into their current curriculum, including programs such as Classworks, Reading Street, etc.

Additionally, the proposal recognizes research impacting student academic outcomes for high-needs students and understands that high-quality early learning programs are instrumental in achieving student learning success. While the state offers little funding for these kinds of programs, the proposal outlines programs to be implemented for early learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the Phi Delta Kappa International audit provided TPSD with information and recommendations to eliminate

inequities in learning outcomes, achievement gaps, and student placement. The proposal intends to address these inequities by offering data-driven personalized learning experiences for its students.

Additionally, ACT scores were used to study the achievement gaps and identify predictors of college readiness among subgroups. The RACE is On proposes dual enrollment, AP course offerings, and graduation coaches to increase college- and career-readiness.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a.i) TPSD's proposal documents several methods by which students understand their learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals through student/teacher and teacher/parent conferences concerning student achievement and goals. One resource is Haiku, which allows educators, students, and parents to communicate daily; other programs are Reading Street, Classworks, and EnVisionMATH that differentiate instruction and aid students in goal-setting.

a.ii) as mentioned above, several programs aid students in identifying and pursuing learning goals linked to college and career readiness standards and graduation requirements, as well as provide measurable data that help teachers, students, and parents identify areas needed for remediation or enrichment. Additionally, TPSD offers extensive Pre-AP programs beginning in 6th grade and AP programs at the HS level to aid students in achieving their college and graduation goals. Common assessments provide data that incorporates the CCSS to aid in college and career readiness as well as increase graduation rates. Additionally, students are offered multiple diploma tracts (26 or 21 credit) to assist them in personalizing and individualizing their learning goals. Finally, dual enrollment courses, graduation coaches, and other interventionists counsel students to make sure every student is aware of every learning and post-secondary option available to them.

a.iii) while not specifically addressed in this section, TPSD offers several programs, i.e. RIDES, TRAC, AND WSI, as well as AP and Pre-AP courses that serve as advanced and enriched learning to develop meaningful experiences in areas of academic interest.

a.iv) students have access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives through the district's 1:1 laptop initiative that provides all students 6-12 with MacBooks for home and school use. These students have access to "the world at their fingertips" wherever they have internet access. K-5 have access to media centers and iPads they may use for research, learning, and other diverse learning purposes. One area not addressed is the possibility that students who would not have access to a computer at home but who receive a laptop through school may still not have access to the internet at home, thereby restricting their use to school only.

a.v) each of the proposals programs and initiatives involve students and parents in understanding student achievement and help students set achievable goals for mastery of learning objectives through projects, research, interactive applications, and student-teacher conferences.

b.i, ii, & iii) a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development, a variety of instructional approaches and environments, and digital learning content are accounted for through the computer-based programs offered at K-8 levels including above-mentioned computer-based and online programs, common assessments, AP and Pre-AP course offerings, dual enrollment courses, differentiated diploma tracts, and graduation coaches.

b.iv.A) student data is frequently updated through the use of 4.5 week or 9 week common assessments and students and parents are informed of this progress through Haiku; students and teachers also receive real-time data and progress charts through Classworks, EnVisionMATH, and Reading Street.

b.iv.B) the above-mentioned data is available to parents, students, and teachers through Haiku, and graduation coaches and interventionists are available to assist students in making positive choices and offering instructional supports.

b.v) for students who are still underachieving with these programs and supports in place, TPSD follows the RTI prescribed by national standards and screens early and often for sped indicators that show special- or high-needs students. These students are supported with appropriate accommodations and are assigned support staff/coaches who will ensure these students set achievable college- and career- ready goals.

c) while the proposal states that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to teachers and students on the available programs, initiatives, and tools, there is limited explanation about who or how this occurs. The proposal states in a later section that there are 8 full-time technology staff members and a few campuses have technology liaisons who aid

teachers and students in troubleshooting technology problems. 8 technology staff to train and instruct 7500 students and 568 teachers appears insufficient and inadequate when one considers the extensive online and computer-based technology and data systems used in TPSD. Additionally, there is limited evidence that a 1:1 laptop initiative is successful beyond the classroom, especially among ED students who may not have access to internet at home.

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

20

11

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a.i) teachers receive training and work both individually and collectively to study student data culled from multiple screeners, including digital tools and common assessments to create and adapt personalized learning plans to ensure students meet learning goals and are college- and career- ready upon graduation with their cohort. K-8 largely uses online digital screeners and applications, whereas 9-12 uses common assessments and Haiku. Teachers and instructional and graduation coaches counsel students in their academic goals to further ensure students' success and readiness. There is evidence of teacher training support that helps teachers learn how to use the resources available to them to measure student growth; however, the number of trainers (11 district-wide) may be insufficient to effectively provide teachers with appropriate training to utilize these tools.

a.ii) there is limited evidence that students have access to discussion and collaborative work or project-based learning, with the exception of programs in place at TMS and PSE through RIDES, TRAC, and WSI; however, there is strong evidence that students have videos, audio, and manipulatives available to them through computer-based programs to engage and respond to their individual academic needs and interests.

a.iii) TPSD provides K-8 digital tools and 9-12 common assessments to frequently measure student progress as well as teacher effectiveness.

a.iv) TPSD documents two forms of teacher evaluation, PD360 and M-STAR, to provide feedback to teachers on best practices and effectiveness. PD360 also provides a forum for professional reflection, support, and intervention based on evaluations by principals and principal recommendation. The M-STAR (to be implemented by the state in 2013) provides evaluators and teachers the opportunity to review artifacts, teacher self-assessment, and student surveys to continually improve teachers' best practices and classroom effectiveness.

b.i-iii) as stated above, teachers have access to information and tools (Reading Street, Classworks, enVisionMath, Haiku, PD360, Next Network [designed to incorporate CCSS into current state curriculum framework], and Common Assessments) to gauge individual student progress, yet the training received on these tools may be limited when considering the number of teacher to trainer ratio district-wide (586:11).

c.i-ii) school principals and district leadership teams specify the use of PD360 and M-STAR as resources, tools, and data for evaluation of individual and collective teacher effectiveness with the goals of increasing educator collaboration, continuous school improvement, and increasing student performance. Data culled from online tools and common assessments also aid school leadership in identifying areas of strength and weaknesses in teacher effectiveness and student progress toward college- and career- ready standards and graduation requirements.

d) 31% of the district's core teachers are considered effective and 28% of the district's core teachers are considered highly effective. Instructional tools and professional development supports are in place to further groom educators to be highly effective teachers and expose students to highly effective teachers. However, besides general educator training and professional development opportunities provided by PD360, there is insufficient evidence that the proposal contains a high-quality plan to increase student exposure to effective/highly effective educators in specific schools, subjects, or high-needs areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) TPSD states that the central office and district policies demonstrate support for college- and career-ready goals to be implemented district-wide, yet the only specific examples provided for this support is when the proposal states, "Recent changes to policies about attendance, absences, and exemptions and new programs like 4x4 block scheduling and extended summer school, have been put in place to support these goals."

- b) TPSD's school principals have autonomy and flexibility to determine school-wide scheduling, staffing, curriculum, and budgeting that comply with district policies. Specific evidence or examples of this autonomy are not provided.
- c) TPSD provides extensive resources and avenues for students to progress and earn credit based on mastery through online tools (Classworks, etc.), accelerated courses, Pre-AP and AP courses, dual enrollment, and GED courses.
- d) there is evidence here and in other places in the proposal that allow for students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways, including online instructional tools such as ClassWorks, Reading Street, and enVisionMath; district and classroom cumulative and summative assessments; and project-based learning such as WSI, RIDES, and TRAC.
- e) TPSD demonstrates a commitment to comprehensive learning resources and instructional practices for ELLs through the use of Sheltered/Structured English Immersion and ESL classes. Students receive instruction in English and the teacher uses multiple activities, aids, and accommodations to help students reach English language proficiency. The proposal states, "To adequately meet the needs of ELLs, teachers have specialized training in SIOP or other research-based ELL methods and/or possess an ELL teaching credential." It is unclear if there is standardized training in one program or research-based ELL method district-wide to provide consistency within schools and across the district. In addition to such accommodations, TPSD utilizes small class sizes also facilitate individualized learning. High school students are encouraged to pursue classes appropriate to their individual college- and career- goals, and college-bound ELLs receive special instruction for taking college entrance exams.

For students with disabilities, the district states a commitment to provide a FAPE, but specific evidence of activities to identify, locate, and evaluate students at all stages in their education is lacking. However, the district does employ 76 special education teachers for 966 sped students (approximately 1:12 ratio), which at least supports a reasonable program of resources and instructional practices. Students with disabilities receive further personalized instruction through annual monitoring and updating of IEPs.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- a) TPSD shows evidence of many tools and resources available to all participating students, parents, and educators, including MacBooks for all 6-12 students and teachers, as well as media centers that include desktops, laptops, iPods, and iPads for school-day use by K-5 grades. Additionally, interactive whiteboards have been installed in all classrooms, a telephone calling system calls families with pertinent district information, and English in a Flash and Rosetta Stone programs are available for LEP students, presumably just at school, as well as Classworks and other previously mentioned programs implemented and in use by the district. While grade 6-12 students have laptops to use at home, it is unclear how the district helps those ED students who do not have access to the internet at home; thus, while the 1:1 initiative is innovative and ambitious, the possibility that students do not have internet access at home severely restricts the purposes and uses to which students may employ these valuable district resources.
- b) TPSD shows limited or inadequate human technology support with only 8 full-time technology staff to oversee all district databases, student management systems, HR databases, library, textbook, finance, reading programs, technology-related purchases, and installation of hard- and software. With only 8 staffers to serve 2500 computers, 75 servers, 5500 MacBooks, telephone and security lines, the support appears rather anemic. While some of this is alleviated by having one technology support staff on each 6-12 campus, it is clear that more support is needed for technology applications to run smoothly, efficiently, and with the intended effect of training and ease of use by all participating students, teachers, and parents. The district recently updated their bandwidth at THS and Milam Elem to 250MB from 100MB and from 10MB to 100MB at all other campuses.
- c) Haiku Learning Management is available for all students, parents, teachers, and administrators K-12, as well as Active Parent and Active Student, which allows parents and students to view progress, grades, assignments. TPSD shows evidence of data sharing and SIF Initiative since 2003 to make multiple data readable in all formats for educators. It is assumed that Haiku, Active Parent, and Active Student provide data that is accessible, readable, and exportable by users. Other programs available for use have been documented, ie Classworks, etc.
- d) TPSD provides reasonable measures to move all district applications to SIF specifications. The SIF Initiative includes Zone Integration Server and agents for student, transportation, food service, and library packages. It is uncertain whether this initiative includes budget data, instructional improvement system data, or human resources data. However, it may be reasonably assumed that this data is stored alongside other information and data within the SIF.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>TPSD will use the comprehensive Plan-Do-Study-Act model, a high-quality continuous improvement model, to study and assure student achievement gains. TPSD identifies four levels of accountability: district, school, classroom, and student. Goal-setting at the district level is data-driven and clearly indicates transparency and involves all stakeholders in a continuous study of student achievement and success. At the school level, teams are in place to communicate the district's goals and establish a reform plan informed by district goals. Teams meet bi-monthly to study data, identify barriers to and weakness in growth, monitor high-needs students, and suggest course correction in curriculum. At the classroom level, teachers study student data to monitor student progress toward individualized learning goals using common assessments, computer-based assessment tools. Principals perform regular classroom observations and offer professional development resources and reflection tools for teachers to assess and reflect on teaching practices, as well as provide teachers adequate time to process data and implement course corrections. At the student level, student and family engagement is key. Families are invited to attend conferences, common core nights, and are regularly informed via teacher conferences and online assessment tools of student progress toward learning goals.</p> <p>While specific information regarding how RTTD funds will be allocated is lacking in this section, other areas of the proposal indicate clear means to monitor, measure, and publicly share information regarding how funds will be spent regarding professional development, technology, and staff.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Transparency, communication, and engagement are extensive and comprehensive.</p> <p>The RACE is On documents extensive measures to critically engage and communicate with all stakeholders. TPSD recognizes that community support is necessary, even crucial, to any kind of education reform. As a result, the district has several strategies in place to communicate with and engage stakeholders, as well as garner data via surveys, to ensure TPSD is meeting its intended goals of student success in learning. Some of these strategies include open houses, parent/teacher meetings, district and school websites, e-newsletters, presentations to community businesses, and civic and faith-based organizations, and the local newspaper, which has a dedicated education reporter. Additionally, THS has created a Council of Excellence comprised of community members, students, alumni, teachers, and parents who presumably help make decisions and who will communicate information to the community and school as they develop. Further expansion of such councils are expected on other campuses.</p> <p>While ample opportunity exists for all community and education stakeholders to be involved in TPSD's initiatives, one area of concern is the level to which the district is able to involve and engage a greater number of parents/families in critical decisions and student success, especially among ED and other high-needs students' families. However, this concern is not isolated to TPSD and it appears the district is taking all reasonable and thorough measures to ensure all stakeholders have a voice if they desire to participate.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>TPSD identifies 11 ambitious yet achievable performance measures with achievable annual targets for these measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district identifies student access to highly effective teachers and principals and effective teachers and principals as (a) required for all applicants, and (b) measured by 1.5 years growth and 1 year growth respectively. The expect a 1% growth in student access to each of these teachers and principals each grant year. • Other areas of performance measures (3) include student proficient or advanced ratings on all state and national assessments, anticipating a 2-4% growth in each area each grant year. The rationale for choosing each of these measures is that state and national assessments indicate student academic growth in grades 1-12, college- and career-readiness, and measure readiness to move to the next grade level. Each measure provides stable and consistent data regarding student success and learning. • Early Prevention of School Failure for Pre-K and Early Literacy Skills for K-3 provide benchmarks and tools to measure reading levels and diagnose learning difficulties. Both EPSF (those students scoring 50% or higher) and DIBELS (language and reading literacy) anticipate an overall 1% growth each year <p>Other areas addressed are:</p>		

- Classworks, which provides formative assessment data throughout the year and will show student performance level in order to remediate or enrich. Anticipated growth 1% overall each year.
- Attendance measures for K-12 satisfy the social-emotional leading indicator of success and predict academic success. Specific (though unnamed) measures are in place, likely according to state policies regarding attendance. Anticipate to increase average daily attendance by 5 days each grant year.
- The number of students completing a FAFSA, required by all applicants, but also a measure of how many students intend to enroll in post-secondary education. Anticipate a 1% increase each grant year.
- The number of students completing a 2 year vocational technical program, a measure used state-wide to indicate career-readiness. With an already impressive 95% completion rate among students enrolled in vo-tech programs, they expect to grow 1% every 2 years of the grant program.

TPSD has identified performance measures but is vague in its approach to reviewing and/or improving measures over time if one or more are insufficient to gauge progress, stating only that the district's leadership team and grant team will identify other means of reliable measures that may be tracked through data systems.

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

The district provides some evidence that a team, comprised of 3 assistant superintendents, select principals, and C&I Director, is in place to evaluate the grant project on a day-to-day basis. The grant team will be divided into four groups to assess each of the projects outlined in the proposal and is responsible for evaluating its outcomes, resources, and activities. It does not appear that teachers or community members are members of the grant team (or are surveyed) to assess effectiveness of grant funded activities, although they are consulted in ongoing communication and engagement.

Observation360, an application within PD360, will be used for classroom observations and professional development. The district has clear expectations of "what good teaching looks like" and will provide teachers with the PD and tools needed to ensure student achievement.

School principals have autonomy to decide school schedules to better serve student needs.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

TPSD provides a reasonable and complete budget summary and narrative (tables) that clearly delineates monies to support the proposal, including money to hire necessary personnel (interventionists, graduation coaches, technology support), and supplies and technologies to be refreshed, updated, or purchased.

The budget clearly states how much money will be used in each area each year and identifies one-time costs as opposed to ongoing costs, Title 1 funds, local funds, etc.

The budget narrative provides a focus and fairly reasonable rationale on strategies and equipments to be purchased or maintained to ensure the long-term sustainability of the student learning environment.

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

The RACE is On presents strong community and state support (civic, faith-based, and private sectors) for sustainability of the proposal. The proposal indicates a long-term sustainability up to three years beyond the term of the grant, but provides data and monies allocation for 1 year beyond the proposal date.

Beyond the \$20million asked for in the proposal, TPSD has secured an additional \$23million to support their proposal both during the grant period and beyond. Furthermore, the district will repurpose local, state, and other funds throughout the grant period to a "savings" fund to ensure long-term sustainability of the plan beyond the grant period. The proposal states that continual assessments and reviews will occur throughout the period to ensure funds and resources from the grant are used to advance the district's goal of achieving student success; however, specific information regarding these continual assessments and reviews remain vague.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not written a separate section that identifies and describes in detail the competitive preference priority. However, each preference priority has been discussed and reasonably met through the other sections of the application, including

- 1) a description of some of the civic and community partnerships the district has created to support the proposal, such as ICC offering to teach classes at THS.
- 2) clearly identified educational outcomes for 10 populations, including pre-K, early learning, subpopulations, high-needs students, at-risk students, college-bound students, ED students, and young families, among others.
- 3) provided evidence of how the district intends to benchmark, measure, and track student growth and achievement; to use data to target at-risk and special population students (ED, ELL, sped), remediate and enrich, and ensure college- and career-readiness; to sustain the proposal beyond the grant years for all future students in the district; to improve student outcomes over time.
- 4) documented 11 performance measures in E3 that would integrate education and other services such as college- and career- preparedness (FAFSA, vo-tech training) and provide for the general welfare of its students (early learning screening, pre-K services, family services for young families, attendance rates). ICC partnership
- 5) provided a budget narrative that includes monies for necessary technology, equipment, inventory, personnel, community support, infrastructure, programs and assessment tools to support student outcomes, address student and young family needs and involvement, and impact student and community lives.
- 6) identified annual performance measures that are achievable and mostly ambitious for the proposed students impacted by the proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has met Absolutely Priority 1 in its proposal by addressing the core educational assurance areas. However, the implementation of programs and technology does not necessarily result in a strong case for educational reform, even though it may be effective in reaching students and families that are otherwise ill-served or are high-need through the supplemental nature of the programs themselves.

Total	210	138
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Race to the Top - District
 Technical Review Form



Application #0501MS-3 for Tupelo Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Tupelo Public School District (TPSD) articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision as evidenced in details of The <i>RACE (Raising Achievement ~ Confirming Equity) is On</i> program focused on personalizing learning and teaching goal oriented to excellence and equity and continuing research and the implementation of the most innovative and strategic data-driven practices. These are coordinated and aligned to state curriculum to ensure students advancing skills and competencies in an ever-evolving society</p> <p>The proposed initiative will serve 7521 students in pre-school through high school with outreach, services and resources to early learners (birth to pre-school), families and career and post-secondary readiness and transition and support services. Identifying the district's tradition of excellence that dates back over a century, the program delineates building on its work in four core educational assurances and commitment to advance their position in continuing to serve as a flagship in public education throughout the state - a state without Race to the Top grants.</p> <p>The applicant aptly identifies the challenges and gains made over the past few years referencing the district emerging from the state's "Academic Watch/D" to reinstatement as a "High Performing/B" district. They specify newly adopted district-wide goals, measurable indicators and an aggressive multi-level approach to impact the achievement gap, increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates. Their vision is driven by a commitment to ensure equity of resources across the district and increase community engagement.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A. The applicant asserts its commitment to equity, in serving all twelve schools in the district to participate in the reform proposals detailed in their RACE is On program. The program will serve 7,521 students enrolled in pre-school through high school programs, with services and resources dedicated to the district's Early Childhood Education Center.</p> <p>While the applicant meets the program eligibility, information is lacking to detail the process leading to the decision to enroll all schools in the program. In addition, they do not assert or identify that all the schools involved in the program, meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, while they state their commitment to ensure equity, is to enroll all schools in the district, adequate information and details are not provided to substantiate this.</p> <p>B. The twelve participating schools are listed by name and grade level. The schools' demographics are clearly explained in detail in the Appendix. Data includes the number of participating: educators; students; high-need students; low- income students; low-income students in LEA; total number of Students in each school and required data. They specify that the plans include 568 teachers and all students pre-K through graduation, including: one pre-K building, and an Early Beginnings center for future students through a birth to kindergarten-ready program.</p> <p>C. The applicant identifies 61.61% of students in the district, are enrolled in the federal Free/Reduced lunch, the state's indicator of poverty levels. The project plan encompasses services and resources for 568 teachers and future students through a birth to kindergarten-ready program, Early Beginnings.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant details a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change and enable reaching program goals to improve learning outcomes for all participating students. This is evidenced in comprehensive details sequencing programs and strategies for district-wide reform encompassing services to early learners through high school. For example, specific reform programs are detailed including:</p>		

early and elementary education initiatives focused on kindergarten readiness; college and career readiness programs focused on decreasing the drop-out- rate and increasing the graduation rate and readiness and support for post-secondary and career success. The applicant supports the design of their initiatives as responsive strategies to address needs identified in community surveys and referencing the fact that 20% of area residents live at or below the poverty level and lack book and educational resources.

The applicant details the current status of early childhood education activities as evidenced in identifying the district operating an Early Childhood Education Center. This Center is one of the few centers in the area that fully implements Pre-Kindergarten Common Core Standards. The Center houses 13 classroom and serve 287 four-year old children and proposes to add two additional classrooms to serve an additional 40 students. The applicant identifies district funds committed for the actual construction and grant funds dedicate to equipping and staffing the two new classrooms. With a vision for a continuum of education, the applicant addresses the fact that expansion of early learning programs will ultimately aide in a large reduction of district retention rate, and increase the graduation rate. In addition, the applicant aptly specifies a time line and the person(s) responsible for each activity and program advancement.

The applicant identifies the effectiveness of their outreach into the community to enroll youth in their early learning programs. They cite the fact that as a branch of ECEC they have initiated an Early Beginnings program to serve as a community resource center to accommodate district/area families of children aged birth to five. This Center currently employs a part-time staff person and aims to equip parents to be more effective in preparing students for kindergarten entry. Grant funds will be dedicated to hiring a full time Center Director to enable the expansion of: staff and community services, its lending library resources and hire eight Parents as *Teachers* educators (PATs) to educate and coach parents and families. In an endeavor to reach beyond the district, the applicant cites their dedicated efforts to morph its Early Beginnings program into a catalyst within the state, serving as a one-stop shop for effective preschool parenting.

Two meaningful reform strategies are detailed and aligned to addressing needs identified in state and local assessment. This is evidenced is a sequenced plan which: copiously identifies the needs of district students in grades K-12; identifies existing endeavors and progress to address specified needs; and details proposed grant program initiatives to scale up and translate into meaningful reform support attainment of district wide goals. For example, the applicant references data from The *Department of Dropout Prevention* for Mississippi school year. identifying 107 high school drop outs in the 2011-2012. This rate affirms the school losing one in four students during the last three years.

The need for high school reform is evidenced in the aggregation of data noting graduation rates for sub groups. For example, data is referenced indicating in 2009 the Tupelo High School graduated 48.5% economically disadvantaged students compared to the state average of a 61.9% for this sub group, and respectively in 2010 making strides to close the gap with 55% of economically disadvantaged students graduating. They note this rate is 11% lower than the state average and demands change, reform, resources and support.

The applicant identifies one current reform endeavor as hiring its first graduation coach this school year, and proposes to diminish the achievement gap dedicating grant funds to add four additional full-time graduation coaches. Job responsibilities of graduation coaches are specified to include: serving at each high school for student support and as interventionists; transitioning eighth and ninth grade students; track individual progress f students toward graduation goals; communicate with parents and act as an interventionist; ensure all students are served and collaborating with staff in developing systemic strategies to identify and support at-risk students.

The applicant designs a proposed program component to proactively address the needs of students which they identify as a "last resort" effort for those students aged seventeen and older who are one or more years behind their graduation cohort, and have not met success with the traditional 21 or 26 Carnegie Unit diploma tracts, or state assessments. They identify currently employing a GED Instructor also restructuring the program to reach and more effectively assist a greater number of at-risk students. The current GED program serves 30 students with a 1:15 ratio in morning and afternoon sessions. Proposed grant funds are allocated for the employment of two additional GED instructors to increase service to up to 90 students.

Information is lacking detailing meaningful reform beyond the participating schools.

The district's adoption of the *Response to Intervention* program strategies, to address the needs of identified students, employs 13 interventionists to provide a 1:49 ratio for services. They clearly identify the lag in this initiative related to the national and district goals of a 1:4 ratio. *The RACE is on* proposes the employment of an additional 21 interventionists advance services to a 1:18 which will greatly improve the level of instruction RTTT-D students receive.

Details of a coherent sequence of rigorous intervention programs is lacking. While the applicant identifies that graduation coaches will serve as an extension to their already existent rigorous intervention program, only two rigorous intervention programs are identified and the program related to the services of the graduation coaches is not specified.

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

A. The applicant provides a brief general statement which identifies their vision which is likely to result in improved student learning and performance. In addition, they aptly chart performance on summative assessments, proficiency status, and project attainable goals for growth and progress. Overall, the proposal is demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals, which predominantly are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the district for most of the student subgroup in the K-12 district. A chart is included which details district wide goals for improved student outcomes, for most of the subgroups, identifying baseline performance and a five year chart of performance goals.

The applicant provides a brief general statement which asserts their vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and decrease the achievement for example, they aptly chart performance on summative assessments, proficiency status, and project attainable goals for growth and progress. For the most part, this is demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals, which predominantly are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the district for most of the student subgroup in the K-12 district. A chart is included which copiously details district wide goals for improved student outcomes, for most of the subgroups, identifying baseline performance and a five year chart of performance goals.

The applicant lacks information to detail the decrease in performance among grade 3 Asian students in the state assessment in Language. In addition, information is lacking to support the applicant's vision and projected performance goal in language arts for grade 3 Asian students. Clear details are lacking to support a five year projected growth of 84% for this sub group, when the reported baseline was 92% (in 2010 and 2011) and 79% (in 2011-2012). Similarly, details are lacking to support their vision for five year growth for grade 3 LEP students who reported 48% progress in state assessment in 2010, and a projected growth to 41%, which is below the baseline.

B. The applicant charts students' performance for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 in major areas, according to performance on state assessment in major areas of language and math for elementary student and for high school students' performance in: English; Reading; Biology; Algebra, and US History. The applicant lacks specify of specific identification of achievement gaps and programs and strategies directly focused on decreasing achievement gaps.

The applicant details performance levels and ambitious and attainable projected goals for students in grades 1 and 2 utilizing baseline line data from district administered Terra Nova Assessments. However, information is confusing in the applicant's five year projected goal to decrease the achievement gap among every sub group. For example, for the sub group Asian White grade 5 students in math achievement, the applicant identifies a 13% baseline status in 2011-2012 and rather than an increase, the applicant projects an increase to 16%.

Details are lacking to support a vision to advance student achievement among the sub group of Asian students in college enrollment. This is noted in the fact that the baseline college enrollment for 2011-2012 is reported as 100%. The applicant projects a five year goal for 89% graduation rate performance which is a decrease from the baseline.

The applicant effectively charts students' performance for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 in major areas, according to performance on state assessment in major areas of language and math for elementary student and for high school students' performance in: English; Reading; Biology; Algebra, and US History. The applicant details performance levels and ambitious and attainable projected goals for students in grades 1 and 2 utilizing baseline line data from district administered Terra Nova Assessments.

C and D. While the applicant presents charts identifying the baseline and present graduation and college enrolment, clear details are lacking to support a vision to advance student achievement among all participating students, especially among the sub group of which Asian students in college enrollment are evidenced as in severe need. This is evidenced in the fact that the baseline college enrollment for 2011-2012 is reported as 100%. The applicant projects a five year goal for 89% graduation rate performance which is a decrease from the baseline.

E. Post-secondary enrollment information or a vision to advance enrollment is not identified.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant adequately identifies a clear track record of success in the past few years in advancing grade three through eight students learning as evidenced in a description of progress in a chart of performance, demonstrating their abilities in

improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. This is evidenced in the applicant's general statement of attaining positive growth over the last few years and a brief chart with supporting data from the Mississippi Curriculum Test Second Edition assessment. The chart identifies the average percentage of 3rd through 8th graders who score proficiency levels in language and math reporting an increase over a two year period of 5.83 percentage increase for all students. The applicant effectively details the average progress of as indicated in progress; 6.08% among White students; 3.91% for Hispanic students and .96% for Asian students. Progress of: 7.17% among black students.

The applicant presents academic achievement and progress attained over the last few years (2011 and 2012) lacking full details of progress of improving student learning over the last 4 years. The applicant merely presents one brief statement referencing progress over the last 25 years in the areas of athletics an art programs.

While the applicant details improving learning outcomes in the past, information is lacking correlating past endeavors to the proposed reform model to specifically continue to improve student learning and closing achievement gaps, high school graduation rates and college enrollment

B. The applicant details achieving ambitious and significant reforms evidenced in a chart which represents the average percentage of 3rd through 8th graders who scored proficient on math and language in the Mississippi Curriculum Test-Second Edition. Data analysis clearly evidences student proficiency levels are the second highest of four levels in which students can score on the test, demonstrating a solid mastery of the content and skills on their grade level:

The applicant identifies the Quality Distribution Index (QDI) which clearly demonstrates student advancing from a QDI of 163 in 2009 to 178 in 2011. In addition, they specify that five of the seven eligible schools presently demonstrate a High Performing status. District-wide QDI has also climbed from 159 in 2009 to 168 in 2012 ranking the district 43rd of 150 in QDI, growth, and graduation rates. They identify that with the present conditions and momentum they expect the QDI to grow from 168 to 176 consequently advancing in to the top third in the state.

While the applicant evidences student gains, they do not specially identify significant reforms in its persistently lowest achieving schools

C. The applicant identifies making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. For example, the identify the Haiku System which is a secure on-line learning management system (LMS) which allows parents to stay in communication with teachers about assignments, instructional content, and events. Easy access is available, via assigned username and password to parents of students in grades 6-12 to enter the portals that contain classes and pages created by district teachers. The interactive features of the system also include: class discussion, assignments, assessments, wikiprojects, polls, and other means that support instructional goals and student collaboration. In addition, parents of students in grades Parents of student in Pre-k to grade five PreK-5 can access their child's teachers' Haiku pages without a specific login. This page enables teachers to communicate with parents, posting newsletters and announcements, organizing some instructional content and links helpful to parents, showcasing student work, and providing contact information. In addition, parents and students can also view daily and term grades, attendance, and course schedules online by accessing the Active Parent and Active Student school webpage links.

Information is lacking to detail a strategy to address the needs of parents who lack internet access and cannot access their child's records and relevant information.

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

The applicant thoroughly details a high level of transparency in district processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. This is evidenced is asserting their full accreditation by the state and the fact that they are subject to periodic monitoring by the state to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards. They clearly identify procedures to inform transparency in creating the shoo budget specifying allowing public budget hearing and publishing the final budget in the newspaper and posting it on the district website.

The applicant details the fact that the district's operating budget is presented to the public as a collection of legal budgets for individual funds and as a comprehensive planning and controls devise. They specify that the budget presentation includes the totals for the number of district wide instructional positions or each position profile. They aptly identify that all support and administrative positions and non-instructional positions expenditures are included in the public presentations and in the final publication of the budget.

The applicant identifies the school budget is presented to the community at open budget meetings and the fact that at that

time details expenses by function and specific categories. Categories are specified as: as instructional; general administration; school administration,; business services; operational services; transportation services; central support services; non-instructional services; facilities; construction services and debt services. They assert the budget categories expenses are provided in a total and also separated by salaries and fringe benefits and other expenses.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details working with the Mississippi State Department of Education diligently during the last two years to put in place measures that encourage educational reform. This is demonstrated in the fact that in 2010 the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English and Language Arts. They also identify the fact that the state joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers as a participant in shaping the PARCC's proposal for common, next generation assessment systems.

While the applicant identifies a long standing partnership the Association for Excellence in Education, whose primary function is to facilitate funds solicited from community contributions, information presented does not clearly identify any specific grant awarded to their district or to any of their district staff or programs.

They justify the district's position of considerable autonomy under the state requirements as exemplified in its implementation of personalize learning environments. This is further evidenced in the district's Board of Trustees policies and by state law. This is supported in the applicant's details of their ambitious Three Tier Intervention Model requiring differential and targeted intervention for struggling students, which is a clear example of the district's autonomy to adopt and create instructional models which complement and enhance the intervention models. In addition, they identify that for the past two summers more than 100 teachers and administrators spent time designing procedures and strategies to create personalized learning environments in writing curriculum guides and reevaluating pacing guides by grade level to address students' needs. In addition, the applicant identifies providing professional development and the delivery of curriculum which are decided at the local level.

The applicant lacks details identifying specific personalized learning environments which address each level of learners in their Pre-K- grade 12 school district. The information that is presented is very general and lacking in details for grade or school level learning.

The applicant identifies their autonomy in ambitious endeavors in creating an Office of Curriculum and Instruction which offers technical an instructional support on a daily basis in order to successfully implement the Program for Effective Teaching model. This office staff also provides support on differentiated instructional strategies through the use of Classwork's Reading Street and envisions MATH programs. They specify the office staff offers staff training in the Barton Method to train teachers on how reach and to teach dyslexic students.

The applicant identifies a long standing partnership with organizations including the Association for Excellence in Education, whose primary function is to facilitate funding school programs which money solicited from community contributions. These are specified as awarded to educators on an annual basis to advance innovative programs. They note that in the past year the Association for Excellence in Education awarded grants to select teachers in recognition of their performance.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents general information to evidence stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal in identifying meetings during the last 18 month preparation period which were conducted with the district's Teacher Advisory Council, the Parent Forum and the Principal's Team. The applicant effectively identifies strategies employed to gather input from students and the results of the open-need survey. For example, the applicant notes the candid response of students noting their feedback related to teachers willingness to go above and beyond in making sure they learn and how some teachers served students learning styles. They also indicate student input requesting additional opportunities to work ahead and not are held back.

The applicant lacks specificity of the extent or meaningfulness of stakeholders' engagement, as evidenced in a limited general statement identifying meeting on a regular basis. This general statement lacks specificity of the time engaged or the depth of involvement for the continuum of input. In addition, the applicant offers a general statement, which lacks specificity, which identifying meetings were conducted on a regular basis with district's Teacher Advisory Council and a Parent forum. They state these meeting focused on the district's overarching goal of increasing student achievement, but fail to relate the results or

input from these meeting on the design of the proposal. While Parent Forum and the Principal's Team are stated to meet on a regular basis, no mention is made of meeting the Committee of 200. This grassroots Committee of parents and leaders is referenced only by their strong past performance and prior input as a driving force for expanding the Early Childhood Learning Center, and lacks specific input into the design of the proposed initiative.

The applicant states that 71% of district teachers were surveyed to gage support of the proposal. The detail teachers' range of feedback noting: they felt Pre-K parents did not have ample means to get their children ready for pre-school and would benefit from training and resources on how to ready their children.

The applicant lacks information to specifically identify the existence or non-existence of a collective bargaining unit. The teachers' level of engagement and support in the preparation and design of the proposal is not clearly delineated. In addition, vague information lacks specificity to identify if the 71% of the staff surveyed are the same audience as the faculty surveyed. For example, the narrative states 71% of teachers were surveyed. However, the Survey Results and Analysis sections report survey data from the faculty. It is not clear if the tern teachers and faculty are synonymous

Details of the applicant's survey of faculty are reported with input into the program design. A five scale ranking survey requested input related to: kindergarten readiness and preschool; providing training and resources for parents; the need for additional interventions for students in K-8; need for curriculum development and assessment of current and proposed programs to advance the graduation rate and career and college readiness.

Survey data is aptly detailed collected from parents and students. This is evidenced in noting the format of the surveys and specific responses which clearly impacted the design of the proposal, specifically related to early learning and college and career preparation

B. The applicant includes letters of support from various community groups. Letters represent general support for the program from: Northeast Mississippi Community Foundation; Itawamba Community College and an Early Childhood Institute. However, letters of support are not provided from any parent or parent groups. The applicant fails to identify persons who comprise their stakeholders group. In addition, information is lacking specifying the engagement or support from the superintendent and the district's administrative team in the design of the proposal.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details an analysis of needs and gaps specifying the current status in implementing personalized learning environment and the logic behind the the proposal for a high quality learning environment spanning early learners and high school students. This is evidenced in the identification of high quality early childhood programs which have been identified as impacting student academic and social outcomes, especially for high needs students served in the district. They appropriately reference research to support their early childhood reform initiatives. Of importance is the fact that their proposal is addressing the need for universal state funded Pre-kindergarten throughout their state. (They identify the fact that their state is one of 12 states in the nation that do not provide universal state funded Pre-kindergarten programs.

The applicant evidences the results of a Phi Delta Kappa International audit that was completed in their district in 2010, and asserts recommendation made have been systematically addressed to eliminate the inequities that result in academic disparities and gaps in student performance. They justification a framework for the proposal which identified needs and will offer services and resources to address the unique needs of students of different ethnic and socio economic backgrounds by offering a more personalized and data-driven learning environment. In addition, the applicant identifies various performance gaps were not uniform across all of the school, and which serve to confirm the greater need for personalized and specific data driven instruction.

The applicant presents a chart of students' scores asserting the imbalance in performance in core subject areas. Data was derived from the Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System. For example, focusing on college readiness, the applicant is goal oriented to increasing the number of students who are prepared for college and who take the ACT assessment. The chart documents the needs of subgroups as evidenced in algebra proficiencies wherein only 43% of Black students attain proficiency and 44% of Economically Disadvantaged students attain proficiency. Comparatively, 74% of white students and 71% of non-economically disadvantaged students scored proficiency levels.

Correlated to the need to advance academic proficiency among subgroups is the fact that 22.1% of While students took the Act in 2009 as compared to 7.4% of black students. In addition, the four year trend of the ACT composite scores reveal an increase in attainment of the test from 358 students reporting a composite score of 20.6 to 359 students in 2012 reporting a composite score of 20. This s in view of the national average composite score of 21. The applicant clearly identifies the reform initiatives to address this need by providing graduation coaches and opportunities for dual enrollment to foster college readiness.

Limited information is presented detailing a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning. This is evidenced in limited information wherein the applicant lacks details specifying the needs and gaps of student in elementary and middle schools. For example, the applicants reports data which is limited to early childhood needs and then on the other end of the educational spectrum related to high school college readiness needs.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A. (i) The applicant details a reasonable high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The proposed reform initiative details sequenced approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students ad addresses the needs of students in kindergarten through high schools to foster students' engagement in and pursuit of a rigorous course of study. Courses of study are specified as aligned to the core standards and Common Assessment to guide mastery and attainment of college- and career-ready standards.

(ii) The applicant details ensuring data is properly aggregate and disseminated to staff, parents and students to advance personalized learning and student understanding of learning. The applicant clearly identifies the program focus related to students understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning it, as key to their success in accomplishing their goals and ultimately attaining graduation and college and career readiness. Staff, students and parents are identifies in abilities to access the Haiku district instructional management system for information and daily communications.

(ii)The applicant identifies pacing guides that incorporate the common Core State Standards which emphasize graduation and college and career readiness. They justify their reform initiative to meet the needs of every study through offering multiple diploma tracts and varied choices in advancing learning. These include the services of dual enrollment, graduation coaches, and additional interventions to support students and encourage every student to take advantage of available support and resources. In addition, the applicant provides a clear description of the high school tracts specifying the traditional 26 Carnegie Unit diploma with AP courses and a non-traditional 21 unit tract that meets the demands of vocational programs an open admission to college.

(iii) The applicant details an innovative approach to advancement instilling in student and understanding of the content and reason for learning and ultimate ownership of their learning, is pointed data driven meetings among teachers and parents. These meetings are structured at a minimum to for grades K-3 students and parents.

The applicant lacks details of strategies to engage all students in deepening leaning experiences in areas of academic interest. While they aptly detail Pre-AP and AP courses, strategies for all students in other tracts to pursue their interests are not detailed.

(iv) The applicant appropriately opportunities for students to deepen their learning as evidence in offering Pre-AP courses in the middle school and taking on the largest 1to1 initiative in the state to provide one computer for each student. They applicant identifies the use of individual computers to foster students to learn beyond the classroom and meet higher and broader standards. They identify the use of technology to advance differentiated learning and communications. They detail program components to address the needs of interests of students evidenced in details of Envision Math and Classworks. The applicant details implementation activities which are culturally diverse and expose students to varied contests and perspectives with real world application for strengthening college and career aptitude and deepen student understanding of objectives.

(v) The applicant identifies the Haiku instructional management system to foster communications among staff, parents and students and develop a team work in approaching learning. In addition, data-driven meeting with parents for students in grades K-3 advances collaboration and team work to foster young learners in mastering concepts.

While the applicant addresses collaboration and communicating with parents and creating teamwork to advancing students learning, details of a continuum of learning beyond grade 3 are lacking.

B. (i) The applicant appropriately details an effective Common Core Standards Assessments which integrates instruction and student performance data to facilitate students personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development. This is detailed in a program design to enable each student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure timely graduation and college- and career-readiness. This is evidenced in a copious description of streamlining the Common Assessment procedures.

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments are detailed and include the implementation of Reading Street, Classworks and Envision Math programs and the 1-to-1 computer allocation program. In addition, high quality programs to meet the needs of students who are underachieving and implements the rigorous Response To Intervention model and employs additional software programs that screen early and often for special education indicators.

(iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements are delineated. This is evidenced in offering Pre-AP courses in the middle school, a dual tract for high school graduation and computer based internet learning through the 1-to-1 computer allocation initiative. In addition, the applicant identifies the proposed initiative to employ a specially designated team of professionals in Curriculum and Instruction who are experts in their respective fields to provide training and support to teachers and student on each programs initiative.

(iv) A. The applicant details procedures on ongoing and frequent feedback through the Common Assessment procedures and the online Haiku instructional management system. Frequently updated individual student data is detailed in these systems an available to staff, parents and students to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. In addition, the district Pacing Guide enables staff to adjust and accelerate instruction. Of note, the applicant includes the draft of the mater Teacher Evaluation Rubric which guides staff and administration in oversight of instruction to ensure addressing student’s needs.

(iv) B. Personalized learning recommendations based on the student’s current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and instructional approaches, and supports are evidenced in the above named programs. The proposed initiative engages staff in a highly structured sequence of programs and procedures to enable personalize learning. In addition, the support of the expertise of member of the Curriculum and Instruction team are identified to support staff and guide instruction to meet academic goals.

(v) The applicant identifies programs and to high-quality strategies to serve high-needs students and to ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. This is evidenced in the expansive offering of Pre-AP and AP courses and dual enrollment opportunities.

(c) The applicant documents the proposed reform initiative to employ a team of professionals in Curriculum and Instruction to provide training and support to teachers and to students to ensure a feasible understanding of how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. In addition, the applicant identifies technology crosswalks have been implemented and aligned to districts' curriculum guides to facilitate deep creative research and project based learning in all grades.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant details a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and become career-ready. This plan sequences varied and differentiated approaches to implementing instructional strategies for students in there K-12 district. A continuum of programs, aligned to multi-media resources and the support of professional staff are positioned to enable students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to: college- and career-ready standards; college- and career-ready graduation requirements; and accelerated learning to support needs and advance interests.

(i) A full implementation of personalized learning and teaching is focused on serving the needs of all students is aptly detailed and aligned to professional development and support for participating educators. Professional development and preparation for instruction are documented in activities engaging staff in training in professional teams that supports their individual and collective capacities which are focused on supporting the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student’s academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready. A feasible approach includes supporting research based instructional tools to continue to increase the number of students exposed to effective and highly effective teachers. The Learning Progression tool is clearly detailed and focused on emphasizing the supporting nature of the Common Core Standards and their link to college and career readiness. This tool is noted to facilitate teachers to navigate the K-12 learning progression of each student n language Arts/English and math. This tool also links the core standard to vital model lessons at every level to facilitate designing personalized learning to address each student’s needs.

(ii) The Learning Progression tool is succinctly detailed to allow teachers to adapt content and instruction, provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, and responds to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimize learning approaches for differentiated instruction and personalized learning.

(iii) The applicant identifies and details the Network program which frequently measures student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and use the Network System which offerd teachers next generation assessment and new instructional system. The Next Network enable teachers to prioritize instructional objectives by aligning each with the Mississippi Curriculum Framework and increase the likelihood of each standard to be incorporated into instruction and assessed. It is noted that this online system engages teachers in refocusing concepts for instruction ad realigning pertinent instructional resources. This system also articulates connections among the new graduation pathways.

(iv) The applicant details the M-STAR statewide educator evaluation which is designed to gather information on teacher strengths and areas of challenge

in order to provide support and the development of improvement for student success. The application identifies the system is being piloted and enables feedback to Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness and produce an individual and collective effectiveness. This tool also processes recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement. In turn teachers utilize feedback to enhance instruction. The applicant delineates the various supports provided to teachers which include a multi-platform of professional development and curriculum resources.

B. (i) The applicant identifies the team of experts on the Curriculum and Instruction team who will be employed through the reform initiative to support educators in advancing their knowledge, skills and expertise in accessing up to date technology resources, tools, and data, to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. This is evidenced in the applicants detailed Next Network program which poises teachers with next generation of assessment and guides and new instructional systems to align instruction and reinforcement of concepts to ensure alignment with skills and concepts assess by the state evaluation system and enable optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests;

(ii) High-quality learning resources are thoroughly detailed to enable student participation in online learning and the use of digital tools and resources and data-driven feedback which facilitates tracking each student's progress and the immediate adjustment of instruction to meet the learning needs of all students. This is evidenced in the district's Curriculum and Instruction team facilitating teacher access to a plethora of resources and in developing supportive training for teachers on the most effective use of all the resources. The applicant identifies this 11 member team assembled two years ago to initiate and provide support and training to all district teachers on the use of district digital tools. In their realm they identify creating and adapting personalized learning environment which include: Reading Street; Classwork's; envision Math; Haiku instructional management system, PD360 for staff professional development varied format a Common Assessment.

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches and support are evidenced in the interventions of the Curriculum and Instruction team who provide support to teachers to enable pacing the delivery of curriculum and conduct regular assessment to gauge mastery and adapt instruction to address each student's needs. Digital tools are details to direct content mastery and provide data to advance communications with parents focused on student achievement. In addition, the Response to Intervention program is aptly detailed and aligned to identify serve students in three tiers through a triangulation of assessment data. This system provides for periodic assessment of student progress and quickly identifies a student who is experiencing distinct discrepancies in progress from his peers. This provides a signal to staff to move the student to a Watch List which engages a Teacher Support Team to review the student's data and design and implement targeted supplemental instruction for a ten week period with weekly program monitoring,

(c) (i) The proposed initiative details a reform model program focused on advancing student learning and provides all participating school leaders and school leadership teams with training, meaningful policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The Race Is On program provides training, policies, tools, data, and resources that include information on the state's new M-STAR district's teacher evaluation system to assist school leaders and school leadership teams evaluate staff performance and take steps to improve, individual and collective teacher effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement. This initiative is framed in research-based instructional tools to facilitate services to increase the number of students exposed to effective and highly effective teachers and to providing professional development to increase the numbers of highly effective teachers.

(ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps are clearly delineated. This is evidenced and highlighted in the PD360 mechanism for professional development. The PD 360 builds on staff assessment protocols including the new M-STAR and serves as a post observation tool for administrators to offer quality in house professional development at a fraction of the cost than out site offerings. Each element of this system includes reflection questions and guidebooks and support an in depth understanding and engagement with a professional resource. The system allows each principal to tailor monthly professional development learning opportunities and conduct staff seminars establishing a climate of professional learning and supporting on going conversations around focused standards and objectives. The PD 360 incorporates a user activity to enable tracking and providing accountability and allowing administrators to monitor professional development. The PD 360 and the Common Core 360 provide an integrated approach to professional development and provide an in-depth understanding of core standards. In addition, the applicant references the Learning Progression tool which emphasis the spiraling nature of the core standards and links to college and career readiness and allows teachers to navigate the K-12 learning progression.

The applicant lacks information to detail a job description of Interventionists who are presently employed, and for the additional Interventionists to be hired under the grant. The applicant lacks any indication of the training or status of the Interventionists as either qualified or highly qualified teachers. In addition, details are not provided to specify the requirements or expectations of the existing and the new 40 interventionists to be hired in the grant program and their status as qualified or highly qualified. Furthermore, the applicant lacks any reference or information on endeavors to hire qualified and highly qualified teachers to staff the hard to staff schools or subject areas.

The applicant details professional development activities which use on-line learning and digital tools. The applicant lacks information detailing integral support structures for this venue of professional development, related to teachers competencies and skills in accessing and using the related hardware and software. In addition, the applicant identifies there are 586 teachers in the district and 11 trainers. The ratio of trainees to staff appears disproportionate.

(d) The applicant details a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers offering a

multi formatted professional development plan in PD 360 and Common Assessment. The applicant details the fact that the district presently employs 13 interventionists to serve students in each of the Tiers throughout the district. They identify a 1:49 ration of interventionist to students and through the proposed initiative to hire an additional 40 interventionists to lower the ratio to a more reasonable 1:12 service.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A. The applicant details a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provides every student, educator and each level of the education system with the support and resources needed. The applicant has defined practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. This is evidenced in general information identifying the organization of the district’s central office which provides support and services to all participating schools. They aptly note the administrative core leadership team which is comprised of the superintendent, three assistance superintendents and the director of curriculum. The applicant references district policies as regularly studied, updated and aligned to sustain practices that address college and career readiness goals. They specify current changes to policies on attendance and the creation of the new 4x4 block scheduling and extended school. They reference their institutional management programs and resources which facilitate continued dialog with building principals in identifying needs and creating and allocating supporting resources. The district is identified an employing twelve principals who have operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staffing decisions, curriculum and budgeting.</p> <p>(b) The applicant identifies the existence of school leadership teams in participating schools, who possess sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and no educators, and school-level budgets. that while directions emanate from the central office administrative level, an entrepreneurial spirit exist that gives principals a school improvement team’s ample flexibility and autonomy. The applicant clearly identifies district goals serve as a road map for each school in designing strategies and programs to attain district goal with the flexibility to creatively execute these goals in their building, promote a culture of shared responsibility and methods and practices for communication a compelling vision for school improvement to all stakeholders.</p> <p>The applicant succinctly details administrative support provided to each of the schools. For example, they identify the district Human Resources Department to provide principals with support in writing job descriptions, posting positing and conducting background checks. They also identify the annual budget process are conducted with input from the building principals and is based on the districts overarching goals and 4 or 5 high priorities. They clearly indicate the district’s organizational state to provide opportunities for schools to create programs that meet the unique needs of their students. They provide an example were one school provided an after school program for students in grades 3 through 5 to provide tutoring. This program is referenced to be create by the school with the help of the Three Rivers Planning and Development Regional Economic Development Corporation.</p> <p>The applicant lacks sufficient information to clearly identify and define the roles of the school leadership teams or the school improvement teams. Details of the members of these teams and their roles in the implementation of the proposed initiative void a comprehensive understanding of their leadership and support roles in staff implementing meaningful programs and support to advance students attainment of proficiencies and learning goals.</p> <p>The applicant lacks specific information in identifying the program stakeholders and the areas of the school and community they represent. C. The applicant appropriately identifies district procedures and flexibility to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. This is evidence in teacher routine assessment of student’s mastery of instructional objectives and the flexibility to adjust instruction and advance students in accelerated courses, Pre AP and AP courses and dual enroll and GED programs. In addition they aptly note the schools integration of technology based interventions and support.</p> <p>(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways in clearly evidenced in programs for students who participate in dual enrollment.</p> <p>(e) The applicant details the district’s commitment in providing learning resources and instructional practices that is adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. This is evidenced in serving the needs of 966 students with disabilities from birth to age 21/ Services are provided with a staff of 76 high qualified special education teachers, 1 school psychologist an 2 special education and/or related service provides. In addition, the district employs 5 interpreters for the deaf and one for the blind. Services are provided throughout 17 different sites offering ample resources.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A. The applicant documents a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system with the support and resources they need. They aptly identify a district and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning and the implementation of the proposed reform initiative by ensuring all participating students, parents, educators have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school, regardless of income. This is evidenced in a detail description of the many digital resources made available which include a take home lap top for each student in grades 6-12 and a reservoir of laptops for students in Pre-K to grade 5 to borrow on a daily basis. The lap tops are equipped with grade appropriate applications. In addition the applicant identifies school resources including the fact that all classrooms are equipped with interactive boards and tools and that during the last two years the district has worked diligently to ensure an equitable distribution of resources thought the district schools.</p> <p>(b) The applicant details a plan to ensure that all students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which is provided through a range of technical staff support. This is evidenced in identifying the districts Technology Department that provides staff support and upgrades hardware and software. The department is charged with oversight of 2,500 personal computers, 75 servers, 5500 MacBook's, IP video security cameras and IP telephones. The Technology Department staff provides support to all staff throughout the district. In addition they identify in the grades 6 through 12 schools and that each school employs a Help Desk Support Staff member on site to provide support for MacBook related issues. This plan also supports school technology related issues and engages in communications with parents to address students needs.</p> <p>(c) The applicant consistently references using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. This is evidence in the Haiku Learning management system available to all students and parents to access homework and school to home communications. They clearly identify that parents and students have access to Active Parent and Active Student system to view daily grades and attendance and an electronic website.</p> <p>(d) The applicant details an ambitious plan which ensures all schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data. This is evidenced in the district's main website which includes information on all department, schools, annual accountability reports, policies, student handbook, parent resources and pertinent budget information. The site is monitored daily and automatically translated in multiple language and offers a messaging system to communicate school news.</p> <p>Sharing of data is referenced and Sharing of information among staff for data driven decisions. This is referenced as the goal of the district and is being addressed by expanding the School Interoperability Framework Initiative which began in 2003 to address sharing resources. Details of this are presents and specify the inclusion of a Zone Integration Server and agents for students, transportation, food services and library software pages.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant details a reasonable and well developed strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The strategy clearly addresses strategies the applicant will employ to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff. This is evidenced in a comprehensive practice of The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model of a continuum for improving student achievement gains. The applicant details the four sequenced components of this model and charts its levels of implementation at the district, school and classroom levels.</p> <p>The applicant states the use of the MSTAR state model, which is a state model and therefore lacks an innovative or new approach.</p> <p>The applicant lacks information detailing strategies to be implemented to address how and when they will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in</p>		

professional development, technology, and staff.

The applicant documents the success of the implementation of the PDSA model or process for continuous improvement involves the commitment from the organization at four multiple levels. These commitments are specified as:

- from the district leadership for setting goals and ensuring goals are communicated with transparency;
- from the School levels, with the school improvement team serving as the front line for implementation
- from the classroom level and teachers monitoring of student progress.

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

The applicant develops strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders proactively focused on continuous improvement to its plan and any possible adjustments which may need to be made during the program implementation phase. They identify many avenues which will naturally occur during the year which can be used to communicate information, progress and necessary program adjustments. These include open house events; parent teacher data meeting and the district and school websites and newsletters. In addition, they specify a local newspaper that employs a dedicated education reporter who frequently reports on district initiatives.

The applicant identifies the School Council of Excellence, which is a committee of community members, students, alumni, teachers and parents whose task it is to communicate to stakeholders the importance of the program's development and progress. In addition, the applicant states their intention to establish similar councils at the other schools throughout the implementation of the proposed initiative.

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

A. The applicant identifies measures to ensure timely and formative information will be offered throughout the plan which clearly address the priorities of the Race to the Top. The performance measures charted are presented as ambitious yet achievable, clearly delineating overall goals for each subgroup, with targeted performance measures. The rationale for selecting specific measures are adequately detailed as focused on the priorities of the Race to The top program and will guide building principals and teachers to work collaboratively to improve the effectiveness of education.

B. The applicant presents performance measures which are rigorous, timely, and formative in leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action. .

C. The assert that should the proposed measures prove to be ineffective and insufficient over time, the district's leadership team and grant team will identify another means of reliable measures that can be tracked through the district's information management system.

The applicant presents 11 performance measures. These are focused on: highly effective teachers and principals; effective teachers and principals; students proficiency and advanced proficiency on the state and local assessments for all grades; early prevention of school failure; dynamic indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills; college and career readiness for high school students proficiency or advanced proficiency on SATP2 and career readiness for high school students in completing a two year vocational training.

The applicant lacks the identification of some of the required performance measures. This is evidenced in the void of details for: Pr-K-3 students for at least one age-appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth; for students in grades 4 -8 for at least one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan for students in high school for at least one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan.

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

The applicant details a plan focused on evaluating the effectiveness of investments. They identify a grant team to be assembled for this responsibilities designating: the 3 assistant superintendents, selected school principals and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. They describe the evaluation process to focus on six question. these questions will serve to garner input and information on:

- how well teaching and learning are creating a personalized learning environment;
- how effectively resources are being used
- what plans are in place for sustainability

- what trends the data is showing
- how well targets are being met and
- what achievement gains are being made.

The applicant delineates the grant team and additional stakeholder will be divided into 4 small teams and each assigned one of the four projects for evaluation and periodic reporting outcomes of outcomes, resources an activities. They assert the ultimate goal is to create a common language for talking about high quality teaching and how classroom practices can be improved.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A. The applicant’s details a comprehensive budget which clearly identifies all funds that will support the project. This is evidenced in the proposed budget for each year an each project. For example one project is focused and Early Childhood education and will coordinate district and Title I funds. A second project is focused on Differentiated Instruction and the first year of the project the applicant has committed district funds and Gear up MS funds</p> <p>(b) The proposed budget details expenditures and documentation for support for each expenditure which appear reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant’s proposal. The applicant clearly asserts that the district complies with all state laws relative to competitive bidding and purchasing procedures. They identify that the Board authorizes the superintendent and/or designee to purchase and supervise the purchasing of all supply item, repair parts, vendor performed services and furniture and equipment in accordance with state law and goo purchasing prices. They detail a procedure for all purchases and procedures and evidence in requiring that all purchases must have prior authorization and be request on proper document utilizing the approved purchase order form.</p> <p>(c) The applicant details a budget and documentation for each expenditure that provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. This includes a description of all funds and clearly charts and itemizes funds from the Race to the Top, federal, state and local funds and specific grant funds. All expenditures are clearly aligned with program goals and will be used to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources. This is evidence in detailing the district funds provide current and future operating budget and that teacher technology tools that directly support technology initiatives are budgeted through local funds. In addition, the specify the district use of Gear Up MS funds for the salaries of several district interventionists.</p> <p>The applicant Identifies funds that will be used for one-time investments. These are detailed in the budget narrative, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. This is evidenced in the applicant details of the district funds and Title I funds to be used for the construction of the two additional classrooms in the Early childhood Center.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a general approach to a plan for sustainability of the project’s goals after the term of the grant. They assert that broad based community engagement and sustainability go hand in hand. They provide a general reference that this can be seen in Tupelo in both private and public sector, on small and large scale projects. They assert that the district is prepared to incorporate a variety of solutions to cover the on-going costs to achieve sustainability exploring support from partnerships and und raiser applicant approach to seeking and securing future funds includes a variety of strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.First, they detail creating a Race Is On Advisory Council whose purpose is to regularly champion the plan and share outcomes with stakeholder and explore ways to leverage new and existing programs or funds to support the reform efforts. 2. A second approach to program sustainability includes continuing to explore partnerships and foundation that may have an interest in the program's projects. In this they reference a grant from Chevron Corporation, Excel by 5 for parent training, childcare and health care. 3. A third initiative includes budget assumptions and engage repurposing of alternative program funds in year three. <p>Overall, the plan lacks components of a high quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. For example, the plan for sustainability lacks depth and specification of potential sources and resources for sustainability. Information is lacking to define the positive value of repurposing funds without hindering another program. In addition, general references are made related to local support. These references lack the specificity or focus on securing funds</p>		

Information presented lacks details related to specific support from the state and local government leaders and actual financial support from other sources.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not address this competitive preference priority.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant meets the Absolute Priority, in a coherent and comprehensive reform initiative which builds on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards requirements. In addition, the detail strategies focused on accelerating student achievement and student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. Professional development programs and training are detailed as offered to staff to increase the effectiveness of educators. The applicant lacks a comprehensive approach detailing strategies to effectively decrease achievement gaps across student groups</p> <p>The applicant clearly identifies programs and efforts to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. For example, the applicant offers student the opportunity for dual enrollment with college programs.</p> <p>While the applicant states they will work toward increasing student's access to the most effective educators, details on how they plan to achieve this are not clearly detailed.</p>		

Total	210	146
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