



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0447NC-1 for Union County Board of Education

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has made a bold and ambitious plan to address its reform vision. The district has focused its efforts on building the capacity of teachers and leaders at each of its participating schools. The district has clearly established a thoughtful and practical approach to building capacity and addressing the four core educational assurances.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The description for why the identified schools were selected is vague. The district does not present a cogent argument for why its schools were selected. It merely stated 42 of the 52 schools were selected because students in the schools had the highest need. It does list the schools as well as the total number of participating students.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district presents a compelling logic model for building the capacity of teachers and leaders to create this reform effort. The extent that the district has partnered with local institutes of higher education is impressive. The district has been thoughtful and pragmatic in its approach to creating change through the people who will lead it.		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district has presented ambitious and achievable goals to increase performance as defined in the notice: summative assessments, graduation rate, closing gaps, and college enrollment. The district has demonstrated a plan to build educator capacity, support student learning with greater resources, align reform efforts to college and career ready expectations, and use data to make further instructional decisions.		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has presented data to indicate improved achievement for its students. The data goes back to the 2010-2011 school year. The district does not demonstrate improved performance over the past four years. Further, the district presents data to indicate its students are performing well, higher than state and national trends in many areas. The district does not have any low performing schools, according to its narrative. The reforms are ambitious, yet, according to the data, seem to be making a good system with good schools even better. Data are presented to various stakeholders through numerous electronic and social media.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	5

points)		
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has been commended for its financial transparency for several years. From its narrative, the district provides a quality service in making its finances available and understandable to the public.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district has demonstrated a strong alignment with state initiatives to support reform efforts in the district and in the state. The district explains how its efforts work in conjunction with the state's Race to the Top actions as well as have enough autonomy to implement those actions to meet the specific needs of the district.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district has provided a substantial amount of evidence to demonstrate support for its initiative. Letters of support from city, state, and national representatives, as well as high support from the teachers in each identified building indicate the willingness of those involved to make this reform effort a success. Further, the district has provided evidence as to the substantial amount of time it has engaged stakeholders to revise this application.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: The district has a strong network of student supports in place to address student needs. The list for each level of learning (elementary, middle, and high school) is impressive. What appears to be lacking is a clear focus on addressing personalized learning environments. The district identifies how it will address current instructional gaps, but not how it will address gaps in implementing personalized learning environments.		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has clearly demonstrated its focus on developing personalized learning environments. It has developed a personalized learning environments (PLE) framework to guide the implementation of this reform effort, as well as address six distinct student learning outcomes to measure success of the program. The district has organized resources and information managements systems to support decision-making for educators and to inform students and parents about student progress. The district does not fully explain what the personalized learning environments will look like and feel like for students.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has developed a high-quality implementation plan to build the capacity of its staff in this personalized learning environments (PLE) reform effort. By working with already established partners with its work with professional learning communities (PLCs), as well as establishing new partnerships with local institutes of higher education, the district is developing the educators it needs for this effort. Further, these close partnerships allow for the district to specifically identify their needs and methods to address them before implementation. Finally, the district is using a train-the-trainer model to grow the capacity of leaders within the district to lead this change effort.		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district already has established a structure to support its efforts in globalization, innovation, and graduation. This application states the district will build from that structure to support this new reform initiative. There is a clear and sturdy structure in place through current policies and procedures to support this new work. Teams have been established in each school and are already involved in intervention efforts. Opportunities have been created for students to demonstrate mastery and earn credit on their time table.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district already has established a structure to support its efforts in globalization, innovation, and graduation. This application states the district will build from that structure to support this new reform initiative. There is a clear and sturdy structure in place through current policies and procedures to support this new work. Teams have been established in each school and are already involved in intervention efforts. Opportunities have been created for students to demonstrate mastery and earn credit on their time table. The district has a robust data management system to provide data to all stakeholders about student progress and mastery of content.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has established a systems approach to continuous improvement. Within the structure are various teams at the school and district level to monitor and adjust improvement efforts. Further, specific personnel have been employed to support these efforts. The district has school websites, as well as specifically dedicated data systems and learning management systems to share data with necessary stakeholders, such as students, parents, and educators.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The dsitricct supports multiple forms of communication and engagment - the use of school websites, Facebook pages, data management systems, and district information portals. Further, district personnel have been hired to use and communicate the data to various stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district establishes a rationale for the goals addressed in the application. It is clear there are concerns the districts intends to address for student achievement. The goals, in general, seem ambitious and achievable.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has established a systems approach to performance measures. It has school-based teams to collect, analyze and use data to make improvement decisions. Further, it has cetral office personnel to review data at a district level. Finally, it has established procedures with its partners to analyze the effectiveness of partnerships in supporting the reform efforts.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget narrative is highly descriptive and informative in presenting the rationale for this budget. The district has demonstrated thorough contemplation of the work, and associated cost for the work, to achieve this reform effort. Further, the budget narrative has been broken down to provide a more focused analysis of each major component of the reform initiative. The district does not always address all of the additional funds used to support the reform project.

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

10

3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district does not adequately address the issue of sustainability beyond the scope of the grant period. It has established partnerships with several groups to support the work, but there is a not clear determination as to the financial sustainability of the reform initiative either by the district or its partners.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Throughout its application, the district has highlighted its efforts to work collaboratively with external partners. The district continues to expand its partnerships to support students in this Competitive Preference Priority. The district has clearly outlined its partners and the scope of the work to be addressed. Further, it identified the needs of the students to be served. Finally, it has established both the measures and the measurement system to inform progress in supporting the students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The district has presented a reform plan that works to build the capacity of educators to support personalized learning environments. Its partnerships with local institutes of higher education as well as local support groups demonstrate a willingness to further support students in meeting academic needs. The district has made efforts to have the necessary resources to create personalized learning environments. It has established communication systems as well as data systems for stakeholders to monitor student progress. It has established clear goals for student achievement improvement, and it has created teams at each schools to monitor attainment of those goals. The district has also created a personalized learning environments (PLE) framework so there is a clear vision of what is the reform work, as well as student learning outcomes so educators are clear how to conduct the reform work.

Total	210	175
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0447NC-2 for Union County Board of Education



A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Union County Public School district's (UCPS) stellarly captures visionary work for school reform:

- a clear approach to accelerating students' learning with globalization initiatives such as immersion programs, Gateway elementary schools, a global scholars program with school designations attached
- innovation initiatives include integrating personal technology within the middle schools with the 1 to 1 Laptop program (as of 2011 10,000 netbooks, virtual schools, and professional learning communities were implemented)
- graduation initiatives provide increased opportunities for students to take advance placement courses or middle school college-like courses (increased graduation rate to 89.5%).

UCPS established reform drivers to move from a program-based district to a systemic reform district. The systemic reform drivers provide the foundation for deepening student learning and increasing personalized student support:

- access to informal and formal content to create personal learning plan that help determine their preparedness for college and careers upon graduation (supported currently by the district's Learning Platform and Project Child initiatives)
- alter the relationship between student and teacher and content through training in blended learning and project pedagogy with the hope of deepening students and teachers understanding of content, production of knowledge and global competitiveness
- adapt learning time allowing students to engage with materials on their own terms and timeline. High need students will have increased interactive support from teacher and other students (blended learning)
- assess learners using formative and summative data. Learners includes all stakeholders - students and teachers, principals and Superintendent.
- use of a robus Educational Data Management System (EDMS) that integrates, identifies, and analyzes various data and is accessible to all stakeholders. An assessment for learning is available for students and allows them to develop rubrics and goals to populate their personal learning plan.

The plan will implement a scaling change logic model that pairs schools providing peer assistance, grade level coaching and modeling, walkthroughs, and paired-school data-driven staff development similar to that of the study listed in Virginia by The Education Trust (2007).

The bedrock of the plan lies in building teacher capacity in order to facilitate personal learning environments that meet the needs of all students:

- partnership with the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Gardner Webb University to host on-site Graduate School of Education (GES) to prepare highly effective teachers and leaders
- the GES will fully teach the foundational pedagogy for personalized learning environments with 184 teachers who will eventually coach and model for other educators on personalized learning environments, assessment for learning, and implementation of the Common Core curriculum.

The school district already has a PLC Coaching Academy which serves as the district's student-focused professional development.

- learners receive training and apply new skills in the context of teaching and learning with a university faculty, staff developers, and teachers
- learners set personal and realistic goals and standards (accountable for own learning).

The visionary goals and current programs outlined in the plan will result in increased student achievement.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Numerous teachers and students would be well-served by the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over 17,000 students from Grades 5-12</li> <li>• over 1,100 teachers and leaders will participate and benefit from the professional development and higher learning with the college partnerships</li> <li>• over 40% of students participate in the free and reduced meals program</li> <li>• 42 of the district's 52 will be included in the program if awarded.</li> </ul> <p>UCSD selected schools with highest needs at indicated grade levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grade band 5-12 considered "college pipeline"</li> <li>• intentions are to service this grade band in order to decrease the need for remediation after high school to be college ready</li> <li>• students who are not college ready will be identified early and intervention efforts will ensue immediately in preparation for college enrollment (A Blueprint for Reform 2010 by USDE).</li> </ul> <p>The plan clearly outlined the participating schools, educators, students, and special school groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 elementary schools</li> <li>• 1 alternative school (67 students with high needs)</li> <li>• 6 middle schools</li> <li>• 8 high schools including an academy of technology and arts</li> <li>• 1 early college</li> <li>• over 8,000 students with high needs will participate</li> <li>• over 7,000 low-income students are included.</li> </ul> <p>Data presented met expectations of selection criteria.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The ambitious yet achievable plan presented is an extension of current district reform efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• district adopted North Carolina's current Race to the Top vision: College and Career: Ready, Set, Go!</li> <li>• developed systemic strategic drivers for collaborative action across the district which includes globalization, innovation, and graduation initiatives</li> <li>• established university partnerships with the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Gardner Webb University to build capacity of teachers and improve student learning, which serves at the Graduate School of Education (GSE)</li> <li>• created a Professional Learning Community (PLC) Coaching Academy to serve as the student-focused hub for professional development.</li> </ul> <p>The GSE and PLC Coaching Academy will partner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generate educator and stakeholder support for the new common core standards and assessments. Collaborate with North Carolina Race to the Top Standards and Assessment team to develop curriculum</li> <li>• Ensure educator mastery of the standards and provide educators with the necessary tools to create student outcomes</li> <li>• support meaningful use of UCPS EDMS to analyze and interpret test data and help students transition to online assessments (EDMS training sessions included)</li> <li>• align high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements to the standards</li> <li>• develop a video library of annotated examples of best practice to populate the Learning Platform and highlight effective learning interactions with students within the grade band</li> <li>• facilitate web-mediated individualized coaching every two weeks.</li> </ul>		
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The theory of action proffered in the plan asserts that the use of the four drivers (access, alter, assess, and adapt) to construct a highly interactive and supportive Personal Learning Environment will produce learners that will graduate with confidence, skills and knowledge to complete college and pursue careers in a global economy.

The comprehensive current and proposed practices could be implemented on a broader scale to include non-participating schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant consistently addressed performance goals on summative assessments; however, the plan indicates that new testing and accountability measures are being developed for 2012-13 school year and has not been released by the state. The following information was included:

- student performance current and growth goals in reading and math (grades 3-8), reading and math (grade 10) were represented
- target content and populations were outlined for decreasing student achievement gaps: reading composites (grades 3-8); science composites (grades 5 and 8); end of course English I; end of course Biology; end of course Algebra I.
- graduation rates from high school were listed as goal growth in increments of 3% through 2016
- college enrollment current status and growth projections included growth rates of 3% through 2016.

The student performance goals indicated for all school groups and subjects is at a consistent rate of 3%, which is achievable.

It is assumed that the district will revise this section once North Carolina releases new state testing and accountability models if awarded.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The UCSD has demonstrated a clear track record of success over the past four years:

- holds the highest graduation rate of any North Carolina school systems its size
- ranks at the top in its growth and performance rate (graduation rate 89.5% in 2012)
- Cohort graduation increase of 12.5% over the last five years, which is the highest in large districts within the state, seventh highest in North Carolina
- 62.4% of students taking advanced placement tests scored a 3 or higher as compared to the national average of 56.2%
- students taking the AP exams increased by 53% over the past four years
- district ranks number one among the state's 15 largest school districts in the percentage of school meeting AYP.

The plan clearly outlines reform efforts to address high needs students and to achieve a 100% graduation rate:

- established The Career Academy of South Providence (CASP) which is a credit recovery program that allows student to graduate on time as opposed to dropping out
- each high school was allocated a School Support Counselor who worked with students beginning in middle school throughout high school. Students were at risk for dropping out due to academic, behavioral, or personal challenges
- pregnancy counselors were provided to assist parent and pregnant students with graduation efforts. Additional staff will be hired through a grant from the Alliance for Children
- created The Alternative to Long-term Suspension (ALTS) program so that students attending the alternative school could continue earning credits
- Each school develops remediation plans to support high risk students.

UCSD uses an existing robust Educational Data Management System (EDMS) that houses student performance data.

- manages, integrates, analyzes and identifying various data extensive amount of data
- is accessible to students, administrators, teachers, and parents

- assessment for learning skills for the student will be added to help students develop rubrics and goals to create personal learning plans.

The applicant demonstrated a clear record of success that addresses the needs of all learners including low-performing students and utilizes a robust student information system available to all stakeholders.

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

The applicant presented evidence of a highly transparent school district:

- school system recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting in June 2011
- UCSD Finance Division has received this award yearly since 2000
- the UCPS website received an A+ for their website's transparency by the Sunshine Review (a pro-transparency non-profit who reviews and analyzes North Carolina government websites)
- Certified Accounting Financial Reports are available on the district's website (last five years)
- newspaper and television are used as vehicles to communicate information about the school district
- district's website lists links for individual schools and contains financial reports, feature stories, announcements, calendars, schedules, partner links, points of pride, and opportunities to contact district employees
- uses ConnectEd, Twitter, and Facebook for immediate communication with stakeholders.

Information about personnel matters (salaries for school level instructional and support staff; teacher's salaries; and actual non-personnel expenditures) was not explicitly included.

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

The applicant provided extensive evidence of state and local support while maintaining autonomy to service the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the school community at-large.

- State supports UCSD implementing and utilizing personalized learning plans as long as the plans are aligned with common core and essential standards.
- UCPS established a PLC Coaching Academy in 2007 to create the conditions for success as implemented personalized learning environments.

The UCSD has already participated in personalized learning environments to support State Race to the Top efforts.

- working with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to train teachers and staff to implement the Common Core curriculum
- attend regional workshops on statewide technology initiatives including the North Carolina K-12 Education Cloud and Instructional Improvement System
- attended Summer Institutes to support induction of new standards and content materials
- new policy and reform efforts have led the school system in focusing upon individual learner needs

The UCSD has been fully supported and appropriately trained by the State and local districts to ensure understanding and implementation of personalized learning environments.

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

The applicant received overwhelming support in the development and refinement of the proposal:

- During the previous four year period, three years of a financial commitment was made to build an infrastructure at the core of the UCPS and at all 53 schools to support personalized learning in the form of anytime/anywhere learning
- various stakeholders contributed over 37,000 hours of their time to ensure a solid, student-centered proposal including: Professional Advisory Council; Site Based Cluster Meetings and Community Forums; Curriculum Caravan; Cabinet Meeting/War Room Discussions; Blended Learning Training; Onsite Support Staff Training; Virtual Platform/Online Course Development; Carolina Online Teaching Certification; Onsite and Central Office Computer Support Staff

The proposed plan received strong support from several stakeholders:

- Congresswoman Sue Myrick wrote "UCPS is dedicated to teaching each student to be competitive in global environments, while excelling in rigorous and relevant core curriculum."
- North Carolina representatives wrote letters of support highlighting the rigor of the plan and the accessibility to the state's longitudinal data tracking system that informs instruction, performance and dispositions.
- Local businesses also wrote letters indicating strong support of the proposed plan and its positive impact on college and career readiness.
- the local public library also wrote a letter supporting the collaboration between the school and the library in support of the goals of the grant
- teacher, student and parent input were considered throughout the editing process of the grant.

It is clear that the UCSD garnered a wide range of support from diverse organizations to ensure personalized learning environments catapult students achievement for the 21st century.

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

The school district presented a high-quality, comprehension plan for implementing personalized learning environments.

- current plan for identifying student needs and achievement gaps and creating individualized interventions begins with data meetings to review assessment data (North Carolina's End-of-Grade and End-of-Course; school data, performance composites, disaggregated data)
- data meetings are facilitated by the Accountability Officer and district directors including the Director of Exceptional Children and Director of Federal Programs
- schools develop site-based plans for positions, programs, instructional materials and professional development that is supported by various funding sources.

The plan includes extensive efforts to provide professional development and positions at all school levels.

- Elementary and Middle: Sheltered Instruction Observation Tool; Response to Intervention; Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports; Professional Learning Communities; Teachers College Reading and Writing Project; and, Teachers and Principals Math Training
- High School: Career Development Counselors; Drop Out Prevention Counselors; Attendance Counselors; College Foundation of North Carolina; Curriculum Coordinators; Instructional Technology Facilitator and Engineer Position; Supplement for Teaching in a High Priority School
- administrators and teachers are encouraged to attend additional trainings such as: North Carolina Closing the Gap Conference; Facilitative Leadership; Crucial Conversations, Crucial Confrontations and Influencer; as well as state and national conferences.

The plan overwhelmingly meets the needs of all stakeholders in preparation for full implementation of personalized learning environments.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan conveys a thorough framework for engaging all learners including teachers, students, and community partners.

- using the Blueprint for Reform, 2010 (USDE) the district developed a plan that makes college and career readiness a priority and backmaps the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for all students and teachers in a cogent way
- continuation of its implementation of common core standards in conjunction with the Race to the Top plans
- using the Educational Management Data System powered by Dell all student growth information will be accessible by

parents, students, and staff and will identify students' "readiness" for post-secondary education by marking students on-track

- teachers and leaders will collaborate to determine evidence to support student's progress and develop appropriate plans to meet targets.

Growth measures are identified to provide students and parents direct pathways to achieve personalized learning goals.

- readiness information shared with students and parents based on most recent performance data and allows stakeholders to monitor progress from elementary through high school
- school will have flexibility based on readiness information to develop appropriate improvement and support strategies for students.
- growth information will be monitored to develop realistic goals for students' personalized learning plans, which will allow teachers to plan appropriate instruction matched to students' needs and goals
- growth bands will be determined by individual student's performance from the baseline assessment and measured for growth using yearly confidence bands. If the bands covers the college trajectory, the student would be marked on track; student's not within the band would be marked not yet on track.

The plan outlines high-quality content as it has already begun transitioning to Common Core State Standards and high-quality assessments:

- generated educator and stakeholder support of new curriculum and the development of appropriate assessments
- provided training to assist teachers in understanding the standards through modeling and coaching in the Graduate School of Education
- alignment of high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements to the standards; EDMS alignment with higher education allowing UCSD to track post-secondary and college attainment data
- Assessment for Learning (AFL) will provide teachers with practical tools, strategies and support to effectively utilize formal and informal data.

Specific feedback opportunities were clearly outlined in the plan:

- all students will develop a personalized learning plan that outline goals from grade five through their sophomore year in college, workforce training, skilled employment or military service. The plan includes a readiness assessment, monitor their progress, refine goals, and create a digital portfolio with the help of educator mentors along the way
- blended learning opportunities will be encouraged where students can learn anytime/anywhere utilizing the best social and collaborative tools in conjunction with the common core curriculum
- students will have the opportunity to adapt their learning style and needs to Common Core standards
- High needs students will receive meaningful, small group interaction with teachers, students, and content
- The UCSD students and teachers will participate in the Learning Platform, a program that provides learners access to networks of people and resources through UCSD blogs, a WordPress multiuser publishing platform where students can present their work, share ideas, and collaborate on projects.

The applicant clearly a comprehensive plan to prepare students for college and careers.

- advisors will work closely with teachers to monitor student's personal and academic development and progress toward the goals and objectives in the student's personal learning plan
- families and students will be trained to use the technology effectively and acquainted with all of the supports available
- students with special needs will receive individual attention in a full inclusion model in an environment conducive to small group learning.

This plan is exceeds the criteria in its robust approach to learning and college, career preparedness.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district's comprehensive professional development opportunities were clearly outlined:

- through the Graduate School of Education (GSE) Enterprise Fellows will be trained to assist teachers in the successful transition from traditional pedagogy to the robust personalization of learning while altering the relationship between student and teacher and content
- GSE will serve as a "teaching hospital" internship/residency model providing preservice and inservice teachers and leaders opportunities to learn
- aspiring leaders will make rounds in classrooms and experience an intimate level of personalized learning

- several Masters of Education or Master of Administration programs will be offered through the university partnerships to deepen understanding of personalized learning environments and the Core Curriculum standards
- The PLC Coaching Academy along with Digital Coaches will provide training in strategic development of electronic learning/curricular resource the various media
- district specialists will establish an organized framework in managing and developing digital curriculum in a horizontal and vertical approach
- district specialists will create, review, and connect digital resources that align the Common Core State Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards within unit and lesson development
- the Learning Platform will create an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their work, share their work with others, and access curriculum in a manner matched for their personal needs.

The district uses an established professional growth system for administrators and teachers:

- principals and assistant principals are evaluated using the North Carolina School Executive Principal Evaluation Process which includes seven standards: strategic leadership; instructional leadership; cultural leadership; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external development leadership; and micro-political leadership
- principal and assistant principals complete a self-assessment and develop goals and expectations for the year
- teachers are evaluated using the North Carolina New Teacher Evaluation Instrument (since 2011-2012)
- underperforming teachers receive support as documented by an improvement plan
- teachers who perform above standard establish a growth plan identifying goals to grow within his/her position
- a superintendent evaluation is currently being adopted within the 2012-2013 school year and must meet the Board of Education's approval.

The school district's current and proposed plans to support administrators and teachers ensures all students are serviced by highly qualified leaders and teachers.

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

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

##### (D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district's plans provides a transparent process that allows access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources in and out of school:

- continuous improvement efforts are grounded in the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: strategic planning process; systemic approach to strategic plan; use of performance data for improvements; implementation of improvements for key processes and improvement strategies; professional development, engagement, and support systems; and, stakeholder involvement
- parents, students, partners and community members will be supported in accessing system resources through web-based tools, applications, and websites
- parents have access to the Parent Assist Module, which gives them access to individual teacher sites to see current assignments, announcements, and curriculum-related items
- digital platforms and learning systems will house parent and student resources such as textbooks, workbooks, and learning tools.

A comprehensive data system provides full access to various data points:

- tracks students progress from Pre-K through college
- personalizes learning by providing teachers with information about the individual needs of students allowing them to take action and enhance learning goals
- administrators can analyze academic, financial, human resources, and other institutional data
- teachers can share information and collaborate on best strategies to improve student performance
- data warehousing allows a secure, integrated repository of district data
- education intelligence delivers data through role-based dashboards, scorecards, and reports to impact instructional practices and business operations
- education data portal is a self-service site for learners (students, teachers, leaders, parents) to access and process the information they needs, whenever and wherever they need it.

Extensive measures are enumerated in this plan to address transparent processes that address the needs of all stakeholders.

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

The applicant presented a robust student information system that will service all stakeholders:

- deliver longitudinal data systems that track student progress from Pre-K through college and into the workplace
- personalized learning through teacher access and insight into the individual needs of students
- administrators can analyze academic achievement, financial, human resource, and other institutional data, create more accurate reports and optimize system operations
- teachers can collaborate and share best practices to improve teaching and learning
- master data management provides a set of processes and technologies that collect, store, integrate, and distribute critical data across an organization's information systems
- data warehousing provides a secure, integrated repository of district data designed specifically for querying and reporting
- education intelligence is a set of services offered that delivers data through role-based dashboards, scorecards and reports to impact instructional practices and business operations
- education data portal is a self-service site for learners (students, teachers, leaders, parents) to access and process the informaton they need, whenever and wherever they need it.

The plan fully supports parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders with access to and training on a variety of data.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Significant continuous improvement measures were included in the plan:

- implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: leadership structure; strategic planning; systemic approach; use of performance data; implementation of improvements for key processes; professional development; and, stakeholder involvement
- ongoing communication and engagement through web-based tools, applications, and websites
- a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation will be conducted that is both formative and summative
  - formative assessment will provide continuous and utilization-focused feedback for partner organizations and participating schools
  - summative assessments will address all key federal performance specified measures and measures linked to the theory of action
  - project outcomes will verify and document the number of teachers and leaders trained, the number of aspiring leaders who pass the licensure exam and complete a Masters in School Adminisgration
  - measures related to fidelity and quality of the professional development provided will be evaluated.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Communication and engagement opportunities available to internal as well as external stakeholders includes:

- the Parent Assist Module where parents can navigate the system through electronic communication, home visits, and school events
- parents have access to individual teacher websites, which allows them to view current assignments, announcements, and curriculum-related items
- upcoming 1:1 digital platforms and learning systems provides access to textbooks, workbooks, and learning tools to

parents and students

- parents may collaborate with students as they develop personal learning plans through such programs as Study Island, CompassLearning, and Discovery Education
- the district's Digital Learning Coordinator will facilitate student and parent participation in the North Carolina Virtual Public Schools.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan included exceeded the number of performance measures required. Baseline data indicates some groups of students are serviced by 100% highly qualified principals and teachers.

The plan included outlined rationale for selection of performance measures:

- chose measures that targeted academic growth and performance
- goals will be established collaboratively and focus on strategies that offer standards based instruction, targeted intervention, meaningful remediation, and extended enrichment opportunities for all students
- schools will provide leaders with strategic plans to support high needs students
- key performance goal is to increase the percentage of students who score proficient on statewide assessments: reading and math in grades 3-8 and targeted courses at the high school level
- subgroups will be targeted: Native Americans, Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, bi and multi racial, White, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English, and Students with Disabilities
- Students with Disabilities have demonstrated the least amount of district-wide proficiency over the past few years.

The promotion of health and social indicators will be through training middle and high school students in guidelines for CPR and by promoting lab experiences on cardiovascular health through health and physical education classes. The classes would services male and females and support the district's goals for developing healthy, active children.

The plan does not explicitly address how it will review and improve the measure over time.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan mentions broad evaluation efforts to determine the effectiveness of investments:

- continuous improvement efforts are grounded in the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: strategic planning process; systemic approach to strategic plan; use of performance data for improvements; implementation of improvements for key processes and improvement strategies; professional development, engagement, and support systems; and, stakeholder involvement
- a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation will be conducted that is both formative and summative
- formative assessment will provide continuous and utilization-focused feedback for partner organizations and participating schools
- summative assessments will address all key federal performance specified measures and measures linked to the theory of action
- project outcomes will verify and document the number of teachers and leaders trained, the number of aspiring leaders who pass the licensure exam and complete a Masters in School Administration
- measures related to fidelity and quality of the professional development provided will be evaluated

Specific measures were not included in the plan nor a timeline for obtaining feedback on effectiveness of investments.

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

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

The applicant's response to this criteria included a detailed budget analysis through an overall summary table outlining projected costs in personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual items, and training stipends. The budget explanations extensively detailed the job descriptions and grant partner along with the specific costs.

- Budget narrative for Project 1: college and career will support the district's transition to Common Core State Standards and other North Carolina essential standards, and high quality assessments; generate stakeholder support of the new standards; support meaningful use of test data and help educators and students transition to online testing; align high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements; support the PLC Coaching Academy; provide college programs to produce effective teachers through university partnerships; create Common Core curriculum and build digital content; onboarding parents and students to various technological programs/devices (\$18,870,673)
- Budget narrative for Project 2: LEA practices, policies, and rules where senior leaders will monitor implementation and compliance to Race to the Top strategies, systems, and methods toward achieving excellence, stimulate instructional leaders entrepreneurship, and build teacher and leader capacity (\$5,543,374)
- Budget narrative for Project 3: LEA practices, policies, and rules to support continuous improvement efforts using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Structures and systems to facilitate timely and systematic feedback on progress toward project goals. (\$332,117)
- Budget narrative for Project 2:

The applicant presented a comprehensive budget plan that fully explains the costs related to the necessary resources. There was no information available regarding external funds subsidizing the grant or directly related to sustainability post-grant funding.

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

A high-quality plan for sustainability post-grant funding was not included in the plan.

Support from State and local government leaders and financial support post-grant funding was not stated in the plan.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided substantial partnerships with public and private organizations in the plan:

- establishment of Enterprise Community University (ECU) to build internal and external capacity for family engagement and will include members from Union County Health Department (counseling services for middle and high school students); Alliance for Children (parenting education program for adolescent/teen mothers); Union County Health Department (fight obesity along with the Boys & Girls Club and Carolina Medical Center-Union)
- creation of a district-wide Parent Engagement Plan that provides opportunities for parents to become engaged with their child's learning and strengthen student achievement
- strengthen partnerships with University of North Carolina Charlotte and Gardner Webb University
- The Federal Programs department will host a Title I Family Engagement Conference with all Title I schools in the winter of 2013.

The school district proposes several strategies for using Race to the Top funds to develop coherent and comprehensive partnerships:

- to achieve collective impact by assessing and aggregate demand to focus its resources through shared measurement systems
- secure the commitment of diverse stakeholders to a common agenda for problem-solving
- increase parental involvement in participating schools to support children engaged in personalized learning.

The plan outlines a structured process to build capacity of staff/parents in participating schools:

- assess the needs and assets of participating students
- inventory the needs and assets of the school community

- create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports
- engage parents and families to identify solutions that will improve results over time
- routinely assess district's progress in implementing proposed plan to maximize impact
- host quarterly community conversations on Saturday mornings on: parenting awareness; helping your child learn in a personalized environment; health and wellness; and, personal growth and development.

Plan identifies four population-level desired results through the following programs:

1. Smart Start, Best Start - educational, family, community: participants will graduate and be college or work ready (target population - pregnant teens)
2. Boys and Girls Club - educational, family, community: participants will stay engaged in school, develop healthy relationships, and avoid risky behaviors (target population - Black, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged students)
3. Passport to Manhood - educational, family, community: participants will be involved in healthy relationships, making good choices, and learning how to deal with their anger and avoid bullying behaviors
4. Obesity Program - educational, family: participants will be involved in making healthy choices in nutrition as well as physical activity.

Plan did not list target population groups for the Passport to Manhood or Obesity Program.

Overall, the plan reasonably reflected established criteria.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant comprehensively addressed the criteria for Absolute Priority 1:

- developed an extensive plan to collaborate with local universities to establish a Graduate School of Education for the sole purpose of building the capacity of teachers in personalized learning environments; to learn new skills and practice applying those skills collaboratively
- established a Professional Learning Community Coaching Academy to provide student-focused professional development
- proposed expansion of the current Educational Data Management System, which all stakeholders can access anytime, anywhere
- generated educator and stakeholder support for the new common core standards and assessments. Collaborate with North Carolina Race to the Top Standards and Assessment team to develop curriculum
  - Ensure educator mastery of the standards and provide educators with the necessary tools to create student outcomes
  - support meaningful use of UCPS EDMS to analyze and interpret test data and help students transition to online assessments (EDMS training sessions included)
  - align high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements to the standards
  - develop a video library of annotated examples of best practice to populate the Learning Platform and highlight effective learning interactions with students within the grade band
  - facilitate web-mediated individualized coaching every two weeks
  - host parent workshops to share strategies to support student.

This is a comprehensive plans that requires a strategic investment in professional development for teachers, students, and parents in creating personalized learning opportunities to increase student career and college readiness.

Total	210	177
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0447NC-3 for Union County Board of Education

### 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 applicant articulates strong, clear and innovative vision for reform seamlessly incorporating the four educational assurance areas. This vision seeks to ensure that all students are prepared for college and career. The approaches to integrate 21st century tools such as blended learning and the opportunity for students to be directly involved in creating their own personal learning plan will better engage parents, teachers and students in the educational process.</p> <p>The applicant understands the tremendous value in preparing highly effective teachers and leaders and will create a pipeline through their partnerships with the two universities in their community. They have a clear plan for training and developing a large number of fellows and teachers who will be able to train their peers and scale the level of training and expertise over time.</p> <p>While educators receive high quality and proven development, students are deeply engaged in their own learning, having an opportunity to take their education into their own hands. For example, rather than focus on seat time, the applicant will allow students who require additional support the ability to actively engage with materials on their own terms and timetables coupled with additional support from teachers.</p> <p>The applicant will apply a theory of action that requires constant assessment of the approach and the ability to adapt as needed.</p> <p>This vision set forth by the applicant will yield the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pipeline of highly effective teachers and leaders</li> <li>• A transparent process in which students and parents can become more engaged and take learning into their own hands</li> <li>• Personal learning plans for students in which they understand and play a role</li> <li>• Individualized learning for all students based on his or her needs</li> <li>• Greater integration and use of technology that will expand learning opportunities for students as well as development and support for teachers</li> </ul>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes in the application the process by which the participants were selected. This includes the selection of the students with the highest need based on academic achievement, a grade band of 5-12 based on the college pipeline, then finally the 40% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.</p> <p>The applicant includes a complete list of participating schools, number of students in each school and band grade, as well as demographic information. These demographics include the number of students from low-income families, high needs and the number of educators.</p> <p>These elements are clearly defined in the application. The applicant has zeroed in on where the need is, how those needs will be addressed and who will address them.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes a high quality plan that includes ambitious yet attainable goals, a timeline, and clearly describes who</p>		

will carry out which actions in the plan. Through their use of the Scaling Change Logic Model, the applicant describes a physician residence type model in which teachers will participate in a multi-level training program. These teachers will then teach their peers effective models in teaching and leading then will train additional teachers until students are reached at all of the schools in the district.

An effective strategy the applicant plans to use is to rely on external resources, ie the universities and other experts to train their teachers and leaders. By the end of the grant period, the training will come more from teachers and leaders within the system who would have trained their peers. This strategy enables the district to save resources as well as build the capacity and institutional knowledge of their own faculty and staff.

One item that is unclear in the application is that the number of participating students diminishes each year. One might think the number of students impacted would increase each year the district is able to implement such teacher and leader training.

The four drivers of the applicant's theory of change demonstrate a key focus on the four assurance areas. Access, alter, assess and adapt create a framework for the district, It also creates a paradigm shift in which data will inform decisions in both effective teaching and learning, allow for adaptation and alteration of practices that will benefit student achievement. This long term strategy will create the foundation needed to build upon student learning outcomes for all students.

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

This applicant has ambitious yet achievable goals and has an extensive list of goals that exceed State ESEA targets and are specific to multiple subgroups. Through the use of proficiency rates in multiple subject areas including Reading, Math and Science, a specific focus on closing the achievement gap between subgroups, graduation rates and college enrollment, the applicant thoroughly lays out baseline data as well as the goals set for each subgroup in each of the stated areas. Based on the applicant's vision to increase the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders and integrate 21st century tools both as means to instruct as well as create individualized learning models, the likely result is the ability to meet such goals.

The applicant has set ambitious goals for each of the subgroups to make gains over a 5 year period as much as 15 percentage points. These are ambitious yet attainable goals with a solid plan and great execution, of which the applicant is poised to achieve.

One area of question is Reading proficiency goals for students in 3rd through 8th grade. It is unclear where the significant gaps are among numerous subgroups within that 5 year spread. For example, among Hispanic students, reading proficiency is at 63.8%. Without knowing if there is a particular year that proficiency is particularly low, it would be difficult to determine if beginning at 5th grade is sufficient for meeting the needs of the students in this subgroup. Furthermore, it is not clear if additional supports in the area of reading would be needed to address this specific need. It is apparent from review of other subject areas that this appears to be one of the greatest needs. If the bigger challenges in reading proficiency exist in the 3rd or 4th grade years, based on the application, these students would not receive the level of support needed until they reached the 5th grade.

What is also of interest to note is the comparison of reading level proficiency among Hispanic, African American and Students with Disabilities. The baseline data is within 10 percentage points, while proficiency among White, Asian and the overall population is more than 20 points higher. It is understandable why students with disabilities would score 20 points lower than non students with disabilities, but it is unclear why proficiency among African American and Hispanic students is as such. It appears students in these subgroups could benefit from additional supports to bring them on par to the overall proficiency of the student population. It is also important to note that this could also mean this district is making significant gains among students with disabilities.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a strong record of success in the past four years, particularly in the area of increasing graduation rates, increasing the number of students who take the AP exams, and even ranked number one in the state's 15 largest school districts with the number of schools that met AYP.

The increase in graduation rates is noteworthy in that the district has a higher graduation rate than the state. It's ranking at the

top in the state due to growth and performance is commendable. These achievements are due in part to the focus the district placed on closing the achievement gap and placing "Drop Out Prevention Counselors" at each of the high schools to work with both middle and high schools students at risk of dropping out. Additionally, the district instituted credit recovery programs and created an opportunity for teen parents to continue to earn the credits needed to graduate. These efforts have proven successful for the district as they have graduated more students than their comparable districts across the state.

The applicant has indicated they have no low performing schools, however in the chart where the Theory of Action is described, a focus on assisting low-achieving schools appears in each section. Other than the reforms that will impact teaching and learning at all of the participating schools, it is not clear what specific efforts will be put in place to address specific needs at low performing schools. Other than the increase in graduation rates and number of students who are now taking AP exams, there is no specific mention of the district's track record in closing gaps for elementary or middle school grades.

The applicant indicates its understanding and focus on using an Educational Data Management System to assess student, teacher, principal and superintendent performance. They indicate the importance of equipping stakeholders including parents and students with the right information and plans to ensure all parents and students have access to student performance data to gauge whether or not they are on track to college and career readiness, as well as utilize the tools to develop rubric and goals towards the student's achievement.

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

It is evident that the applicant has a strong record of transparency and communication efforts in their community. They have received awards for their level of transparency from a non-profit organization and is the only district in the state to do so. They've demonstrated that the the district posts financial information from school to district level on their website covering a five year period. It is clear from the number of visitors on the main page that members of the community are accessing information.

It is not clear that among this information is the listing of actual personnel salaries for any district employees. The applicant does not include such a report in the application and therefore it is difficult to determine is such information is included.

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

The applicant has indicated strong ongoing communications between the State Superintendent and the district Superintendent to ensure alignment of state and district standards, In addition, within the vision, the applicant demonstrates both the alignment and the expansion on state goals and how the district will meet such goals.

The applicant understands it has the autonomy to implement personalized learning environments so long as they are aligned with common core and essential state standards. It is evident that the district benefits from a strong relationship with the state and has struck a fine balance between alignment and autonomy. The district has participated in a number of trainings and development opportunities to ensure district educators are prepared. The district has demonstrated a strong track record of leveraging state resources to train and prepare its teachers to implement personalized learning environments.

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

It is abundantly clear that thousands of hours went into the preparation of this grant application and even more went into the creation of the platforms needed to implement the vision. It is also clear that the applicant has invested its own financial and human resources over the last four years to develop their vision discussed in the application. What is not clear is the level of participation from students and parents in the creation of the application and overall vision.

The applicant does reference in a chart, the 72 hours spent conducting Site Based Cluster Meetings and Forums, however, it is not clear what was discussed at these meetings, how many people attended, of those that attended which were parents, teachers and students, nor if any feedback was provided to inform the application process. This does not demonstrated any meaningful stakeholder engagement.

The applicant also includes a chart that demonstrates teacher support for the application. In fact, 97% of the participating teachers have indicated support for the application itself. It is not clear, however by the lack of letters of support why they

support the application or how engaged they have been throughout the process.

The numerous letters of support are largely from businesses and several non-profits in the area. It is evident that all of the municipalities within the district are supportive of the application. This does demonstrate the strong relationships that exist in the community and the confidence these stakeholders have in the school district. In the charts listed, none indicate members of the business or non-profit communities, nor elected officials as participants in such events. This leads to a question as to whether these stakeholders have an understanding of what the district is proposing.

A critical set of voices missing from the letters of support are parents, student organizations, advocacy and community based organizations. It does not appear that there was a "grassroots" effort to connect with the community to obtain feedback or present the ideas to be included in the application. As a result, the applicant cannot demonstrate that the proposal was revised as a result of their engagement.

The applicant does include the process by which every 48 hours during the grant writing period, stakeholders provided feedback. As a result, there 103 iterations of the application. This demonstrates the thorough process by which educational experts were involved in the process. However, it is not clear and it appears the applicants missed the opportunity to involve in a significant way, parents and students, those who are directly impacted by this.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that there are plans in place to assess and analyze the needs and gaps impacting students and teachers through the use of data team meetings. This is an effective strategy in making school level decisions. Lacking in this plan are the specific timeline, specific activities that will be carried out to achieve such actions, the deliverables and who would be responsible for carrying out the actions once decisions are made.

It is also important to note that other than employing strategies such as incorporating a Response to Intervention program at all grade levels and reducing class size positions, the focus appears to be on adults and where they are placed. There is not much focus on the implementation on personalized learning environments for students based on what the data indicates is needed. There is also no mention of some of the 21st century tools the district has determined will be effective in meeting personalized learning environment goals. The primary focus on teachers is critical to ensuring students are being taught by effective teachers, however, this must also be balanced with the use of effective strategies that work for students. The applicant does not present a high quality plan that speaks to their current status, the logic behind the reform proposal, and does not include critical elements of a high quality plan.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has established an innovative approach to ensuring that students are not only prepared for college and careers but are also playing a significant role in directing their own educational outcomes.

The state is still in the process of adopting Common Core and state standards. Additionally, the district will embark upon the development of curriculum in subject areas not covered in Common Core. The applicant plans to use RTTD funding to enable 100 teachers to develop curriculum over the summers throughout the grant period. Although the curriculum is not fully established, it is clear it will include colleague and career ready standards.

Through the use of the Assessment for Learning tool, students will learn how to develop their own rubrics, goals and objectives for his own personal learning plan. This tool is not only an innovative way to utilize technology, it is a transformative approach in engaging students at every level of their learning. Students will have a clear understanding of what the standards are, where they stand, and develop their plans with assistance from advisors to obtain those goals. This approach eliminates the long held top down approach in which a teacher sets the lesson plans, determines which standards a particular lesson meets then delivers a one size fits all lesson to the class. Through the use of both the AFS and blended learning technology, "the four walls" of education are being eliminated. This enables a student the time and customized teaching needed to reach his or her individualized goals.

The applicant uses what they call six categories of supportive interactions that will encourage students to learn skills such as goal setting, problem solving and critical thinking that will assist in sharpening their developmental needs. Through these six

types of supportive interactions, students will also be exposed to a number of high quality instructional approaches including project based work, summer programs, community based learning, and active independent study. Again, these are tools to help students obtain personalized learning opportunities based on their strengths and preferred way of learning.

Through the use of technology, the applicant will provide a wide array of opportunities for students to learn, communicate with teachers, share their personal reflections, obtain feedback, as well as connect with peers. Additionally, the learning platform will allow students to determine whether they are on track for college readiness.

The applicant will contract with Visiting International Faculty to ensure students and teachers have access to a globally integrated and personalized learning opportunities. In addition, the applicant plans to provide a study abroad opportunity for 25 students and 10 teachers, institute a Splash Immersion Program, create Gateway Elementary Schools, and create Global school and teachers designations.

The applicant goes beyond k12 education and provides opportunities for qualified students to access college course while in high school. With credits earned, students can transfer seamlessly to state and some private colleges with at least 44 hours. In addition, students who plan to transition from high school to career can also access tuition free course credits at a community college. This well thought out strategy reaches students at all academic levels, and socio economic status and provides them access to college and career exposure they can use post their k12 education. Additionally, the applicant seeks to reach first generation college students and even acknowledges the cost savings for students seeking to obtain a 2 to 4 year degree. The applicant not only seeks to prepare students for college and career and high school, but even provides a head start with college and career.

The applicant plans to offer a number of instructional supports and approaches teachers can use to meet the needs of the students through the Educational Data Management System.

The applicants notes the distinct needs high needs students will have and addresses this issue with offering additional time from teachers and work in groups. High needs students will also benefit from the "anywhere/anytime" model of learning that gives them the time they need to obtain their educational goals.

The applicant plans to "onboard" both students and parents through the UCPS Community University. While the Community University has laudable goals to engage parents in the education of their children and has a number of ongoing activities planned, the applicant does not specifically address how they will ensure the maximum amount of parents will be trained to understand the data systems, the new approach to education, and how their opportunity to be much more engaged in the education of their children. The applicant presents a strong case of the what, but does not indicate how and how much. This is absolutely critical as the applicant has noted, parents must understand this system to ensure all stakeholders are engaged in the personalized learning opportunities of students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The primary focus of this applicant's vision for reform rests with the training of teachers and leaders. Through partnerships with colleges, the applicant plans to prepare and develop 184 teachers and leaders who will then train the more than 1,000 participating teachers in the selected grade bands. The most important role of the Enterprise Fellows will be to drive a paradigm shift among teachers to move from a traditional teaching pedagogy to one of project based. The applicant believes this approach will ultimately lead to a more personalized educational system for students. In these efforts, teachers will have to adapt their instruction and content to better meet the needs of students.

While the fellows are being trained, the district has also contracted with a company to extend professional development activities to participating teachers. Activities include; Cross Curricular Organization, Teacher Development, and Virtual and Electronic Course Development. Additionally, teachers will have access to a number of web based resources including a video library of short clips featuring best practice teaching and web mediated individualized coaching. Through this training, teachers will be able to identify learning approaches that respond to the academic needs and interests of their students.

The district has established robust data and learning platforms that are integrated. This platform will inform teachers of their student's progress, allow them to make content, curricula or teaching tool adjustments to better meet the needs of students. In that students and parents have access to the same information, it creates a platform for stronger communication between teacher and student and engages the student at a much higher level in their own educational outcomes. This also adds a tacit level of accountability for students and teachers in that everyone has access to similar information and can make decisions accordingly.

It is evident that the LEA utilizes evaluations for teachers and principals. For teachers who are in non-tenure status, they receive 3 observations per year. For those who have obtained tenure and are not in a year of renewal, they receive one observation per year. For principals, although not clear, it appears that principals receive feedback more frequently. The applicant describes a process by which principals and assistant principals receive a combination of formative and summative evaluation opportunities and individual coaching in order to enhance their practice. Their more formal evaluation occurs at the end of the year. Recommendations are made at this time, a teacher may be given feedback to consider a leadership position, or may be put on a performance improvement plan, It is evident that employment decisions are made using evaluations. However, based on this information, it seems that teachers will have to rely heavily on the Learning Platform to gauge their performance on a more regular basis or make any necessary changes in real time. This is especially the case for those teachers who have obtained tenure status. This is a weakness in the overall plan to ensure teachers are utilizing data in rapid time to make necessary adjustments in teaching and support. Educators will also have to rely on the platform to gauge collective effectiveness as well.

Although stated that all participating teachers will receive training, it is not clear in the Logic Model when these trainings will take place and how often. The applicant has indicated their strong commitment to ensure teachers have the knowledge base and the support for this approach. The timeline is not evident.

The applicant does indicate that the Superintendent, the Strategic Planning and Technology Committee and the Project Director will all be responsible for using strategic staffing to staff high need schools with highly effective teachers and leaders, it is not clear how they plan to achieve this goal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has organized a structure leveraging the current school board's Strategic Planning and Technology Committee to support the RTT effort. This entity will serve as an advisory board to the superintendent as well as take on numerous roles including communicating and coordinating efforts related to RTT across the district, and identifying areas that require additional attention, It is unclear what the responsibilities of this committee are prior to the potential award of RTT, whether this is a group of community volunteers or whether these individuals are appointees of the board of education. It is important to have buy in from members of the community who can serve in these many roles. The applicant does not make clear the accommodations that have been made at the central office to support participating schools in this effort. The applicant does include a Project Management organization chart that includes a Project Director and Team Leads for four key areas, however the specific roles that will be played from the central office is not clear.</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that participating schools will be given complete site based management through Strategic Staffing resources, so long as decisions are deemed necessary based on data and student need. This designation will allow school leadership teams the flexibility they need make personnel decisions, set schedules and calendars, and determine responsibilities.</p> <p>The applicant possesses a mindset of education anytime/anywhere. To that end, students will have the ability to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery rather than focusing on the amount of time it takes to grasp a particular subject. Through the use of the learning platform, students are able to demonstrate master a number of ways including the use of portfolios, information sharing with peers and teachers, online tests, and video.</p> <p>The applicant recognized the digital divide among students and designed the 1:1 program to bridge this gap and ensure all students had access to online learning opportunities. There is no specific mention on access for students with disabilities and English Learners, however it is clear that the applicant seeks to provide equal access for all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Through the applicant's 1:1 program, it is implied that all participating students, parents and educators have access to the

necessary content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school. The platform being built allows for access from anywhere and at anytime. It is not clear whether all of the participating students all currently have access or if this is one of the goals of the district.

Through their partnership with Dell, the Learning Platform will be created. Services that come through this partnership include technical support for users. It is not clear how accessible this service will be to parents, students and educators. Certainly this is a critical element in that users will need access to support to have their questions answered and problems troubleshot. The district will set up central services that will house the Office of Student Services. It appears their primary function will be to disseminate data generated reports to stakeholders. They will also hold educational sessions in the district. These are important tools but does not speak to the technical support offered. This is an important element missing from the overall implementation plan.

The applicant addresses the need for parents to have access to on-line resources such as Study Island and other web based sources. Additionally, the applicant indicates that parents have access to individual teacher Moodle sites. This information will help them view current assignment, announcements and curriculum related items. The applicant does not however discuss the parents' ability to export their information into an open data format and use the data in other learning systems. This would add a significant opportunity for more parental engagement. It would give parents an opportunity to more hands on in the learning process for their child.

The applicant uses interoperable data systems that include elements such as human resources data, student information, budget, etc. Given the applicant's record of transparency in district finances and operations, it can be expected that stakeholders will have access to such information and will be able to access it along with student data.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates their plans to implement a system based on the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. According to the applicant, utilizing this strategy has yielded significant results for other districts.</p> <p>The applicant determines that both formative and summative assessments will be conducted. Formative assessments will give continuous feedback that can be used as feedback for participating non-profit partners and schools to utilize for any necessary improvements. Summative in that the applicant will review the performance measures and whether or not the goals are being met. The applicant indicates a final report will be presented that would include information on the investments made in human capital. For example, the report will list the number of teachers who participated in the Fellowship programs, the number of aspiring leaders who pass the School Leader Licenser Assessment, and those who complete the Masters programs. The applicant acknowledges that short term outcomes would address evidence of knowledge acquisition, whereas the long term would address changes in practices. In other words, the applicant understands this project is as much about raising student achievement as it is about shifting the way students are educated.</p> <p>The applicant plans to provide ongoing formative feedback to the Cabinet Council, Project Director and participating schools.</p> <p>The applicant does not mention reporting done that will include the number of dollars spent on technology, specific to the continuous improvement process.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has scheduled 6 community meetings to inform and engage members of the community of the progress of the proposal. Significant plans to provide ongoing communication and engagement are not found within the proposal.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes at least 12 indicators they plan to measure over the grant period that include the number of students who have highly effective teachers and principals, proficiency in Reading, Math, End of Course Tests in Science, and also includes two health indicators, the number of students who receive CPR training and the amount of physical activity they experience. The applicant provides a rationale for selecting such indicators which is primarily based on the highest need across subgroups. The applicant has also determined a special emphasis will be placed on students with disabilities as they've determined they've had the least amount of success with this group. Of concern is also the status of minority students in the district among several academic indicators. While the district has pointed out the need to focus efforts on students with disabilities, and rightfully so, there should also be a focus on closing the gap between white and minority students in the district. Such emphasis is not apparent throughout the application.

It is not clear how the applicant plans to review and improve the measures over time. The applicant discusses plans to measure progress of the implementation of its plan but does not discuss in detail the plan to improve measures over time. These are two distinct plans as one focuses on ensuring the success of students, the other focuses on success of the overall plan. Both require ongoing review and continuous improvement.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has indicated it will evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD grant by looking at program efficacy, ensuring district funded activities support the purpose, how funds for programming have been applied, and reviewing individual school and district results and whether there is a need to modify school schedules and structures. Lastly, they plan to include looking at the value of community partnerships and resources.

The applicant understands these are key elements in evaluation and continuous improvement. A clear high quality plan is not evident that substantiates their desire to conduct such analysis.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a thorough and well thought out budget and a narrative that gives a clear explanation of how funds will be utilized to support the project. There are no external funds within the proposal being used to support the project.

The applicant thoroughly identifies which budget items are one time investments and those used for ongoing operational costs.

The applicant provides a clear, substantiated budget that illustrates the full scope of the proposed project.

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

Other than utilizing trained Fellows and trained trainers to help prepare all participating teachers, the applicant has not included a plan for sustainability of the project's goals in terms of a budget. While it is clear that the state and local government leaders support the project itself, there is no indication of financial support of the project beyond the 4 years of the grant period. There is no high quality plan included, no mention of potential sources and no mention of budget plans beyond the grant period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a wide array of community resources and partnerships they will access to provide a number of supports to high needs students participating in the project.

Through the Enterprise Community University, the applicant seeks to build the capacity of parents and the community providing a number of supports including parenting classes, personalized learning, health and wellness, and Personal Growth and Development. Additionally, the applicant envisions that the ECU will serve as a structured support system for partnering organizations with its own dedicated staff that will ensure ongoing communication, building of trust, and enforce the power of collective action. Some of the partners include: Boys and Girls Club, Smart Start Best Start, a program for adolescent/teen mothers, Passport to Manhood and an obesity program.

The applicant has expressed desired outcomes in both educational and community and family supports. These include high school graduation for students participating in Smart Start Best Start, healthy relationships and behaviors, good nutrition and physical activity for black, white Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students. Through the use of the aforementioned programs and partnerships, the applicant believes these desired outcomes can be accomplished.

The applicant has some deficits in this section of the application. While their strengths are the number of partnerships they are able to leverage, it is not clear how many students will be served through these partnerships, and other than identifying teen mothers, it is not clear if the students determined to be served are doing so based on the data. There are select schools that appear to be served by certain programs but it is not clear if these decisions were based solely on proximity to the facility or some data driven decision that determined this particular population has greater need.. Without using data to determine which students are to be served, it is not clear how the applicant will determine which students are best suited to benefit from these community supports.

Additionally, while the applicant has identified some clear desired outcomes, they are not necessarily connected to selected indicators. Therefore it will be difficult to measure the desired outcomes. For example, the applicant states they want to see students engaged in school, develop healthy relationships, and avoid risky behaviors. The performance measures listed relate to participants in the Boys and Girls Clubs improving on their Reading and Math test scores. There is a disconnect in that the programming offered by the Boys and Girls Clubs addresses more of the social factors such as engagement in school, avoiding risky behaviors, and an increase in health awareness, not academic support outside of allotting homework time. The applicant does not demonstrate the link between what they seek to measure and what their partners are offering in terms of programming.

Without having clear indicators to track performance, the applicant will not be able to accurately measure at the student or aggregate level, the benefits of these partnerships.

Because there is no mention of a specific number of targeted students to be served, it is difficult to determine the applicant's plan to scale up and reach students beyond the participating number of students.

The applicant understands the need for both a collective agenda and collective goals and as such will create a structure within the ECU with staff. The team will also work closely with the system's education foundation to ensure there is compatibility among the entities. To this end, the applicant has also determined there will be a shared measurement system in which partnering organizations will be able to access the EDMS to be able to report performance and measurement outcomes. This process will be used not only for measuring outcomes but also for sharing best practices and holding all parties accountable for their successes and failures. These are key elements that the applicant demonstrates knowledge, however, without clear indicators to measure, this will not be possible.

The applicant has leveraged strong partnerships with community organizations whose work will provide indirect academic support. For example, the group sessions at the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Passport to Manhood's focus on safe relationships, how to access help and bullying. These aren't academic curricula, however, the applicant understands that providing these social supports will create a more healthy, well rounded student who is able to focus more in the classroom.

The applicant has determined that the staff of the ECU will be responsible for creating the structure to support assessments, inventories, and engaging parents and families of participants. The applicant acknowledges the importance of this structure but does not include a specific plan.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
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Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the application, the applicant provides a thorough and clear plan as to how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. The applicant has successfully integrated meeting these four areas by weaving it into teacher training and development, the use of 21st century tools and in its efforts to shift the paradigm from one teacher to all students to a personalized learning environment for each student.

Not only will the efforts of this applicant deepen student learning, they have the opportunity to transform education as students and the community know it. Students will learn what it takes to be college and career ready and will be able to take control of their learning, setting their own time table for mastery, setting their own rubrics and goals, and be able to communicate with their teachers more effectively about their own educational experience.

The applicant has clear plans to increase the effectiveness of educators, expand access to the most effective teachers and learning tools, and decrease achievement gaps across student groups, all through the use of rigorous standards, digital learning, and an educational approach that is more child centered.

Total	210	160
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