



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0448SC-1 for Williamsburg County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the application clearly describes the district's current work in each of the four educational assurance areas, this description does not represent a forward-thinking "reform vision". They provide a credible approach to accelerating student learning (e.g. adopting Common Core) but are lacking any evidence how this proposal may personalize student support, include academic interests or increase equity. For example, proposal mentions a "data room" in each school displaying all of the typical "school report card" data-- like state testing pass rates, grad rates, etc. but this does not constitute a vision for reform that would personalize student support. Further, the proposal describes a New Teacher Academy and a revised state-mandated teacher evaluation system but there is no evidence that these processes will further develop teacher capacity to improve student achievement. The proposal primarily documents existing practice of adhering to state requirements and guidelines and does not provide much of a vision regarding how this project will change any of that.</p> <p>Throughout the proposal, the applicant refers to 4 primary goals and "16 activities" however it is never explicitly stated what these goals and activities are. Presumably, the four goals are simply the core educational assurances copied from the NIA without any additional detail as to how the LEA will <u>reform their existing practice</u> to address these assurances.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides a solid rationale for including all schools in the system by explaining that they are a relatively small system with a homogeneous population of lower-income students. However, numerous inaccuracies and inconsistencies also exist in their description of "participating students". To illustrate, they initially say that participating students will include all those who take state-required tests (e.g. gr.3-8 & 10) but later in the narrative it is stated that ALL of their 4,712 students will participate. Then, in the tables provided it shows that all of the students in the district's PK-2nd school are participating but only half of the students in elementary schools (PK-6th). It goes on to say the percentage of participating "low-income students is 91.46 percent" and in the next sentence says the "total number" of the district's low-income population is 63.79 percent. It is unclear what the difference is between the school district's low income <u>students</u> and their low-income <u>population</u>. Then, proposal cites a total of 394 SWD and says this is 13.6 percent, which is confusing since 394 equals only 8.4% of their enrollment mentioned earlier in this same paragraph.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal does not include a high-quality plan and the narrative is repetitive at times. Specifically, the plan does not include any information about deliverables or the rationale behind the activities specified. For example, the objective of increasing grad rates includes an activity focused on mainstreaming SWD from 5th grade through middle school. The SWD subgroup represents a very small portion of this district's enrollment. Further, this same objective (re: grad rates) is linked to an activity that involves prof'l development for Reading and Math initiatives but there is no evidence of what these initiatives <u>are</u> or how they will be related to grad rates. Other confusing parts of this plan include "Formative assessment to align with assigned teachers", as it is unclear how one would align an assessment to a teacher.</p> <p>In addition there is very little mention of how this proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. Most of the text simply describes the existing practice of this district and does not describe how it will support district-wide <u>change</u>. The theory of change provided is vague. For example, the list of "Inputs" include every single stakeholder group along with "state and national resources" which seems like they're simply providing an exhaustive list without convincing evidence in the narrative to support the involvement of many of these stakeholder groups (e.g. community partners, parents, etc) Theory of</p>		

change also mentions activities like "triangulating data" which are not supported in the narrative with evidence or specificity.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal demonstrates achievable goals (e.g. increase of 3 percentage points in the pass rate per year) though these goals are not particularly ambitious and are inconsistent with goals stated in the existing strategic plan written in 2011. Specifically, the strategic plan dated 2011-2016 states a goal of increasing 5 to 7 percentage points in the pass rate for various state assessments. Basically, if they meet the RTT-D goal of 3 percentage points, they could fail to meet the district's goal of 5-7 percentage points. Further, there is no information about state ESEA targets for this LEA so it is unclear whether this goal of 3% equals or exceeds the target. The proposal is confusing in some places and inconsistent in others. Specifically, the proposal states "In specific cases where the performance targets do not exceeds the base optional, [LEA] has implemented aggressive percentage targets". It is not clear what the narrative is referring to here. Plus, the tables reflect the same goal of 3% per year for every subgroup which is not compatible with their previous statement about "aggressive" targets in "specific" cases.

There is very little evidence of how the applicant will be able to decrease achievement gaps. The proposal indicates their "analysis" showed achievement gaps between SWD and non-SWD and between ED and non-ED but these gaps have been well-documented historically and don't represent an in-depth analysis personalizing the learning experience for their students. In addition, after these gaps are cited narrative goes on to briefly describe an intervention with SWD students which will supposedly translate into a decrease in the gender difference (no convincing evidence of this); also, briefly describes a program where senior citizens mentor elementary school males but again, no evidence or rationale is provided regarding how this program will improve achievement.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, this proposal does not demonstrate a clear track record of success and the narrative includes numerous contradictory statements and lacks evidence the LEA has engaged in anything beyond the typical "business-as-usual" practice mandated by their state.

(a) Specifically, applicant claims to have a "clear and consistent record of success in the area of graduation rates" however rates decreased from 73% in 2011 to 70.9% in 2012. Further, the narrative claims a "clear record of success is evident in all three high schools" with regard to college enrollment, but goes on to explain that college enrollment rates decreased in one of the three, which contradicts their previous statement. Further, the table demonstrates considerable year-to-year fluctuation in college enrollment rates from 2009 to 2012. The total number of students is @ 400 so not only are fluctuations expected, their proposed goal of a 3 percentage point increase is minor and will likely represent an insignificant fluctuation among such a small group of students.

Applicant claims to have demonstrated a "clear record of success in....several areas", but only mentions Writing. In addition, the improvement in writing from 2009 to 2012 is not consistent, going up and down from year to year resulting in only a net increase but not a consistent annual increase. The same is true for the table showing changes in subgroups, which includes males/females in 8th gr Math and 7th gr Reading but only shows females and disabled for 4th gr Reading with no explanation at all for this discrepancy. In addition, the figures presented do not represent any progress in closing achievement gaps since it is very vague and unclear as to who the comparison group is for each of the subgroups presented. Another example includes a comment from a female high school student on the RTTT survey asking whether they support the district's application for "25 million dollars" which states "*Most of our teachers are unqualified. All of the classes are a piece of cake. There are no incentives for the students to do better. Maybe the money could actually help.*"

(b) Applicant does provide specific information about reforms in their lowest-achieving schools. Three schools (out of 12) are mentioned as being SIG schools receiving assistance from the state DOE. However, these reforms are state-level not district-level and do not necessarily represent the district's efforts toward ambitious reforms in their schools. For example, hiring a counselor consultant to improve the practice of two high school counselors does not constitute an ambitious reform.

(c) The proposal provides examples of how data is made available to students, educators and parents, (e.g. newspapers, emails, parent meetings) but there is limited evidence of how this data is used to improve instruction and services. For

example, distributing data at Title I Parent Info Meetings doesn't necessarily improve the participation or services children receive. Several references to the "ESEA Waiver process" are included in this section which makes it seem as though this narrative is not specific to the RttT-D proposal but rather, these announcements, meetings and avenues through they disseminate data are in place for another purpose.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the proposal provides evidence of transparency in salaries and expenditures, some parts of the text are irrelevant and inconsistent with neighboring text making it unclear what the applicant is trying to convey. Specifically, the applicant states compliance with state reporting mandates regarding expenditures and readily shares instructional salaries with the public through their website however they admit that non-personnel expenditures are not readily available to the public except through minutes of Board meetings where school-level budgets are submitted. This explanation about expenditures is followed by some irrelevant text including statements about "21st century tools to deliver instruction...with the goal of enabling all students tailored WCSD integrates a high level of...." which is confusing.

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

10

3

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal does not provide great detail about how personalized learning environments will be implemented. Further, their definition of a PLE appears to be limited in scope. Specifically, the applicant claims to have implemented PLE's since 1977 and defines this as providing a "base level of funding for educational services" as mandated by a state law. Simply spending a minimum amount of money does not provide sufficient evidence of conditions that will support successful implementation of PLE's. In addition, the applicant lists how they've complied with state mandates (e.g. Charter School Act, EEDA of 2005, etc) and stated their intent to comply with all RttT-D mandates, however this compliance does not necessarily demonstrate autonomy.

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

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides clear evidence of how input was sought from stakeholders for the development of this proposal. One relatively minor inconsistency exists in their solicitation of support from students and other stakeholder groups (e.g. parents, retired teachers). One survey asks students if they would support an application for "25million dollars" to improve their schools, and the other survey asks teachers/parents whether they would support an application for "5 to 10 million dollars". However, it's important to also note that support was solicited regarding whether they should submit the application and doesn't contain any evidence that stakeholder groups approved of what the plan contained. Nonetheless, the use of surveys and school site meetings and electronic communication represents a thorough attempt to involve everyone. The extent to which feedback was used to revise the proposal is somewhat unclear, however. While the proposal mentions receiving feedback, it doesn't clearly specify from whom it was received and what the feedback was, specifically, that was incorporated into the revisions. The applicant simply states feedback was used, but not how or where (in the proposal) it was incorporated. In addition, there is not convincing evidence that the minimum threshold of 70% approval from teachers in participating schools was obtained. The proposal only says "Teachers attended (meetings) and gave comments" and also says a teacher survey indicated 98% of teachers "agreed" the district "should apply for" the RttT-D competition which seems like it was a survey given prior to proposal development.

The proposal does include a fairly exhaustive list of stakeholders invited to meetings and from whom letters of support were received. (e.g. numerous social service agencies, community organizations, and institutes of higher education)

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

While this proposal references a plan included in another section, it does not clearly explain how their analysis identified specific needs and gaps that will be addressed by this plan. The only concrete example provided was that high school students expressed a desire for SAT/ACT Prep courses and access to AP courses so this was identified as an area of need. The other parts of the narrative, like the mention of "built in academies" is vague and provides little evidence of how this plan is linked to an identified need or gap. In several places, the proposal restates text from the NIA without evidence to support or explain how these parts of the selection criteria will be met. For example, simply stating they will "redesign and strengthen teacher preparation, development retention and evaluation of teachers and principals" does not provide sufficient explanation

for how this was identified as a need other than a brief mention of difficulty in getting teachers to continue living in a rural, high poverty area of the state.

There is no specific mention of how the applicant assessed their current status in implementing personalized learning environments other than stating they provide the state-required minimum amount of funding per student.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides some examples of how learning goals will be individualized, but overall does not provide a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching through the provision of PLE's. The adoption of rigorous standards is discussed (e.g. Common Core), along with a few grade-specific strategies in place to improve achievement, but the proposal does not contain convincing evidence that students will have access to personalized instructional content or personalized, frequent ongoing data.

Several parts of the narrative simply restate the NIA without specific examples of how these areas will be addressed. Specifically, the applicant states "students will understand how to structure their learning....." but there are no examples of how students will be taught to do this or how educators will know whether students possess a sufficient level of understanding. The applicant describes "Individual Learning Communities" at each grade span but these seem to be nothing more than the development of a "learning plan" for each student with no mention of how frequently teachers/students will refer to or seek guidance from these plans. The applicant cites the use of the Reading Recovery program, intended for 1st graders, and how it will be expanded to all elementary schools. However, there are no details provided about how a 1st grade program can be expanded to students in grades PK through 5th while remaining developmentally appropriate and rigorous.

The "Individual Growth Plans" described for middle school students include college and career ready grad requirements but the only other example of how this selection criteria will be addressed in middle schools is the inclusion of the state's "GEAR UP" program to promote achievement and college awareness. This program, and its use in this LEA, appears to have a long-standing history and is not dependent on this grant funding. As a result, this proposal doesn't include any additional supports to improve middle school achievement beyond the creation of the individual graduation plan to facilitate the transition to high school. The proposed supports in high schools seem to mirror what was proposed for the middle schools. While the applicant states "students will be engaged in a variety of high-quality instructional approaches" and they'll be "engaged in high-quality content", no specific examples are provided as evidence for how this will be accomplished outside of their plans to increase AP course offerings, test prep activities and "individual learning plans".

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

C(2) – The narrative is very vague and does a poor job of describing specific ways in which the LEA will be able to use this grant to accelerate learning and fully implement a personalized learning environment for students. Further, text related to future professional development (presumably funded through this grant) lacks specificity; for example, when specific instructional topics are mentioned (e.g. project based learning, STEM learning strategies, explicit direct instruction, etc) they are only in reference to training that has already occurred or programs that are already in place so it is unclear what, if anything, would change as a result of this grant. Some examples include:

- Proposal mentions new teacher induction and mentoring that occurs during the first year, but this strategy only supports teachers in the first year after they join the district and doesn't appear to focus on important topics specific to this district (e.g. supporting learning for students from poverty).
- Another strategy mentions partnering with Frances Marion University to help teachers get certified in Special Education, but SWD represents only about 8%-10% of their total population. It would seem more beneficial to focus on working with students from low-income uneducated households since the proposal frequently refers to this LEA's region as "poverty-stricken"
- The proposal states "Teachers and school staff members also conduct professional development sessions" but never says what topics are included or who the attendees might include. In addition, the proposal says training "will" be provided to better equip teachers, but only cites "content courses offered to all English and Math teachers" K-12 without a solid rationale for how additional content courses will facilitate their ability to provide a personalized learning environment.

- The LEA states they “frequently measure student progress” by “analyzing graduation rates”. Annually does not constitute 'frequently'. This data only comes out once per year and really only measures progress of high school students and not the elementary or middle schools participating. It is unclear how they plan to use analysis of graduation rates to improve the “individual and collective practices of educators” as stated in their proposal.

Overall, this proposal describes what the LEA has already been doing and does not provide evidence or specificity regarding how they will be able to revise and improve implementation during this grant period.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant does provide several examples of LEA practices that address items specified in the NIA (e.g. mastery-based progress, adaptable instructional practices, governance serving all schools) there is limited evidence as to how these policies and practices would facilitate personalized learning. In fact, many of the cited practices have been in place for a number of years and have not, yet, created any sort of positive, consistent trend in achievement or graduation rates as evidenced in earlier sections.</p> <p>For example, the proposal mentions use of Academic Plans for Students (APS) for any student who is below grade level. This practice has been in place since the 1998-99 school year, according to the proposal, but has evidently met with limited success given the historical achievement presented elsewhere in the proposal. Another part talks about an annual School Renewal Plan, but an annual evaluation of progress toward goals doesn't really facilitate personalized learning because by the time you see areas where you're not making progress, the school year is over. And again, this process has apparently already been in place for a number of years without yielding a great deal of change.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposal cites Board Policy Code IA as containing the educational goals for the LEA but never specifically states what the goals are and how they are (or can be) aligned to personalized learning.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's description of the school infrastructure that supports personalized learning is limited, and somewhat vague. For example, the applicant states they will "work toward" ensuring data systems become interoperable with no examples of how this might be accomplished. The proposal also states the district's strategic plan is reviewed annually, however the most recent revision provided was done "during the 2010-2011 school term". The narrative mentions "vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment" which is a beneficial practice that can often yield improvements in achievement, however few details are provided regarding how that alignment is implemented and monitored. More specifically, the applicant provides the assertion that all students will have access to tools and resources to support implementation by explaining the various ways they will increase awareness through websites and updates during existing meetings. This increased awareness described in the proposal does not provide any solid evidence that students will actually have access to necessary content and tools both in and out of school.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not include a high-quality plan since the activities do not appear to be anything more than what many districts have been doing for decades. Specifically, the narrative discusses the development of a District Improvement Plan and the subsequent development of School Improvement/Strategic Plans aligned to the district's plan and all of these plans are reviewed annually. This process does not, in and of itself, facilitate a personalized learning environment for students, and isn't likely to yield results different than what the LEA has experienced to date. Further, the plan is very inconsistent, contradictory and vague in places and also has unrealistic timelines. For example, several grant-funded positions are proposed to be filled</p>		

by January 15th, yet applicants will not even know the results of their proposal until right before the Christmas holidays. It is somewhat unrealistic to hire several district leadership positions in two weeks.

In addition, the plan mentions “school and district quarterly reports which document CIP implementation and progress” but there is no evidence of how these quarterly reports are used. While the plan does provide timely and ongoing implementation feedback (e.g. weekly updates for Superintendent, monthly Board meeting updates, and quarterly data reviews) there is limited evidence there will be any opportunity for “ongoing correction” as specified in the NIA. The only examples provided cite an annual process through which they modify the plan based on progress toward goals. (a practice that seems to have been in place for several years) Some examples of contradictions include the statement that “ongoing corrections will be made through:” – 1. reviewing the data (which only occurs quarterly); 2. Providing professional development (though topics/schedules are only planned in August of each year); 3. Disseminating information to stakeholders (giving out information doesn’t necessarily allow for ‘ongoing corrections’) and 4. Ensuring fidelity of implementation (through a review process which only seems to occur annually)

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

The applicant provides a detailed plan for communication and engagement with everyone except students, who are included in the applicant's list of "internal stakeholders". The description of the webpage dedicated to RTT-D is thorough and demonstrates an opportunity for visitors to the website to submit comments and inquiries, or link to other relevant sites. This is a very efficient process for collecting feedback from stakeholders, however no examples of how the existence of and functionality of this website will be shared with the community-at-large, which is another "internal stakeholder group" listed by applicant. Another solid example of ongoing communication includes the "question/answer period" during the monthly parent meetings, and updating teachers during the district-sponsored professional development that occurs quarterly. Both of these venues are ways to collect valuable feedback from constituents.

However, it is not evident what "16 activities" they're repeatedly referring to when they say they'll update stakeholders on these "16 activities" that support "excellence through reform". The table titled "Specific Activities/Measures" contains quite a bit of redundancy (e.g. "hire short-term personnel" is mentioned 13 times in the table) but even eliminating duplicate activities there still are not 16 unique activities contained within their plan. It is unclear where this number is coming from.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Numerous inaccuracies are present in the applicant's proposal. Additionally, this proposal does not have a minimum of 12-14 performance measures as required by the NIA and does not provide a solid rationale for why it will use this limited list of performance measures. Specifically:

- * the baseline columns do not provide the year so it is unclear where this data came from.
- * "Performance measure" row only says "based on the applicant's on-track indicator" which is vague and it is unclear whether this refers to passing the state required test. It also does not specify any subject-specific tests.
- * Applicant put "N/A" in all of the 2012-2013 columns indicating they're not expecting any change beyond the baseline year for 2012/13.
- * Inaccuracies include: the number of participating students in all of the tables for gr.3-12. Though the rows indicate a subgroup, the total # of students is the same for every row. This results in all of the percentages being calculated incorrectly. Specifically, it is not possible (in this proposal) to have a total of 2,021 students and also have a total of 2,021 males and 2,021 students with disabilities.
- * The % of participating students who are "on track" in grades 3-8 is projected to be 99% overall by 2016/2017, however the % of males who are on-track is projected to be only 55% and this is not mathematically possible for both of those to be true.
- * The targets for % of students in gr.3-8 who are on-track remains unchanged for males through the life of the grant (e.g. 55% each of the 4 years) and actually declines for SWD (from 14% at baseline to 5% in Years 3&4 indicating poorer performance for Special Education students)

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

While the applicant provides specific information about “activities” that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of their

investments, the link between these activities and the “guiding questions” is unclear. They describe both a process evaluation and an outcome evaluation which is an acceptable and comprehensive design for an evaluation of this magnitude. However, the plan does not specify how evaluation data will be used to guide their efforts to more productively utilize resources and improve results.

- For example, one evaluation activity states “specific interventions will be monitored to make sure they’re achieving outcomes”, but it does not say how these will be monitored.
- Another evaluation activity includes “compensation reform” but this is not referenced in detail anywhere else in the proposal so it’s confusing and does not specify what exactly is being examined in terms of compensation.
- MAP is included in the list of “summative” assessments but several other places in this proposal it is referred to as a “Formative” or “benchmark” assessment
- Guiding questions simply address whether the project staff are doing what their plan said they would do but does not evaluate the quality of that implementation.
- “Effectiveness of implementation” is included under the outcome evaluation portion and reflects more of a process evaluation since they’re referring to the implementation process.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal specifies the amount budgeted for each of the four core educational assurance areas but no thoughtful rationale is provided for these investments. Further, the proposal is lacking detail to determine whether the expenditures are reasonable. Specifically, they budget \$50,000 for "contractual" work with the lowest performing high school in an effort to improve graduation rates. No information is provided regarding the frequency of the technical assistance or how many providers there will be. No basis or calculation is provided for the figure of \$50,000. Similarly, the budget shows \$304,480 for "training stipends" under core educational assurance #3, but they only specify training teachers in the new state-approved and mandated evaluation system. This training will have to be done regardless of whether this proposal is funded. No specific details are provided regarding how the applicant arrived at the figure of \$304K. (e.g. No cost per teacher, or number of teachers or length of training for which they're providing the stipend). The first educational assurance which focuses primarily on implementing the common core only budgets \$251K for "supplies" with no rationale for where that number came from.</p> <p>One minor strength of this section is that the applicant specifies the staff positions (e.g. project director and math/ELA consultants) that will be one-time investments but these are described as "short-term" (except for the Reading Recovery teachers) and no strategies to ensure long-term sustainability are provided. Essentially, when the money goes away, so do all of the positions that are created to support these struggling schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not contain a high-quality plan for sustainability primarily because there are no specific deliverables or rationale provided. The proposal mentions a "Sustainability Committee" that will meet monthly. However, the group responsible for monitoring implementation during the grant only conducts "data reviews" on a <u>quarterly</u> basis and only revises the implementation plan <u>annually</u>. It is unclear how a sustainability committee will "document and evaluate outputs and outcomes" on a monthly basis when this data is only collected annually in most cases. Essentially, this proposal indicates that RTT-D funds will be replaced with Title II-A funds upon completion of the grant, and these funds will be supplemented with "private, foundation and other grant funds" only if the sustainability committee is able to locate and secure such funds.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive description of partnerships with two IHE's in their area. Substantial detail is provided</p>		

and demonstrates evidence that significant thought was put into the planning of these programs, with an eye toward sustainability. For example, the plan states how the IHE will track student performance before and after graduation and provide the LEA with information about how their graduates perform when they enroll after graduating from this LEA. The performance measures are clearly delineated (e.g. ELA and Math, specifying the test used and the annual goal) and goals of 3% point increase annually are consistent with other goals in this proposal, however not particularly ambitious goals.

Another partnership with a social service agency describes the "Parent-Child Home Program" which presents a highly valuable opportunity to intervene early with their population of students from high-need households and is considered a strong integration of education with services that address cultural and social needs. This partnership could potentially benefit a significant number of future students in this LEA. The goals and objectives of this model are clearly outlined and supported with evidence from research in this area. In addition, the applicant provides several examples of how this program has a track record of success with high-need families (e.g. exceeding readiness measures in the early grades, significant increase in IQ assessments, etc). In addition, the budget for this partnership is highly specific with details about the number of home visits, books, etc. that would be necessary to serve a significant number of high-need children during the four year grant period.

Overall, the plan and budget for the latter portion of this two-part Competitive Preference Priority (Parent Child Home Model) is more well-designed than the first (partnership with IHE), yet both partnerships contain a plan for implementation with a significant amount of detail and provide a solid rationale for how these partnerships will ultimately benefit the students greatly.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes several references to the core educational assurance areas and describes how they will incorporate their existing work in these areas. While minimal detail is provided about how they will expand their work in these areas, the applicant does demonstrate evidence of a desire to accelerate student achievement. For example, the development of individual plans will facilitate their personalization of strategies. However, information about how they will deepen student learning and decrease achievement gaps across subgroups is very limited.

Total	210	64
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0448SC-2 for Williamsburg County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described how their ongoing reforms efforts align with the four core educational assurance areas demanded by this competition.

To assure that the district has college and career ready standards, they have adopted the Common Core State Standards

(CCSS).

The district regularly measure student growth and success in core academic areas of social studies, English Language Arts, Math, and writing using the statewide assessments. These data are used to improve instruction curriculum. On the school-site, comprehensive data, including formative and summative assessment results, teacher and student attendance, discipline records, graduation data, and objective growth plan are reviewed by teams of teachers to improve their instruction.

The applicant addressed how they currently recruit and develop highly qualified teachers. Under the new teacher evaluation system, the district is expected to address teacher effectiveness more aggressively by taking into account student growth in the evaluation system.

The district currently has lowest-performing schools. The district is investing resources to turn around these schools by partnering with the state department of education and monitoring fidelity of the schools' implementation of the reform plan.

The applicant clearly stated that the district is committed to improving student achievement and creating personalized learning environments. However, what was missing to support this claim was their actual vision statement. For this reason, a mid-range score is given to this section.

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

The process the applicant used to select the participating schools was clear. The proposed project is a truly a district-wide effort as it includes all students in its schools. The district has a very high percentage of students who are from low-income families (91%). Therefore, the participating schools collectively meet the competitions' eligibility criteria of 40% or more of the participating students who are from low-income families.

A list of schools that will participate in the proposed project was provided with the grade levels each school serves.

The total number of participating students, students form low-income families, high-needs students, and participating educators were clearly presented. Total number of participating students exceeds 2,000. Therefore, the applicant met the eligibility criteria. In the narrative the applicants broke down the number of high needs student describing the type of high needs (e.g., disabilities). However, the language that was used to describe students with disabilities are not person-first language and does not reflect the vision of equity and student-centered learning.

The data presented in the table does not match the information presented in the narrative. The applicant stated that all students in the district will participate in the proposed project. However, there was a big discrepancy between the number of participating students (2,882) and the total number of students in the district (4,712) in the table.

For this reason, a low medium range score is given to this section.

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

It is commendable that the applicant made sure that their activities address the four educational assurance areas. In the implementation plan, they specified what activities will address which particular assurance area. However, it was obscure what the applicant was proposing beyond their current reform efforts. There are several activities listed in their logic model and the implementation plan table. For example, the applicant listed "Increase student achievement among students with disabilities by using the MAP data. In the narrative, the applicant stated that teachers are already using data (including the MAP data) to inform their instruction. Also, "Increase achievement" could be a goal, but not an activity. Additionally, described activities lacked details on how they will be implemented and why it is important to carry out those activities. For these reasons, a low range score is given to this section.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented annual growth targets for each grade and student-subgroups in Math and English Language Arts summative assessments. The annual increase rate of 3% maybe considered as ambitions, but the goals cannot be determined as achievable or high quality for the following reasons.

1. The table (A)(4)(b) did not really address the achievement gap. Although each subgroups annual target shows increases over time, the gaps don't change between the subgroups.
2. The language used for students with disabilities, "disabled," does not reflect the vision of student centered learning.
3. At this point of the application, it is still not clear what the applicant is proposing to do to achieve the goal of increasing student achievement. It is obscure in the narrative what will lead to the goals (a) through (e). The narrative is at times fragmented and does not articulate feasible plans. For examples, to address (b) Decreasing achievement gap, the applicant described their current partnership with a local university. Then the author jumps to on achievement gaps between student subgroups. How the partnership addresses the achievement gaps was not articulated.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evidences the applicant presented as the record of success in the past four years are inadequate. Several sets of data are presented, including improved high school graduation rates, college enrollment rate, writing scores for the 5th and 8th graders, and subgroup comparisons in reading and math. However, some data cannot be considered as representative of the district-wide track-record.</p> <p>Also, the presented record doesn't really evidence success. For example, PASS sub-group data displayed widened achievement gaps between students subgroups and decreased achievement for many of the sub-groups over 4 years.</p> <p>The applicant described some specific programs and initiatives that put in place to turn around their lowest achieving schools. They hired a new principal, and external consultants, implemented a academic remedial program, extended the school day, and partnered with local college to assist students to gain college credits. However, the outcome of these efforts were unclear.</p> <p>The applicant stated that they made individual and overall student performance data available to students and other stakeholders within the district using local newspapers, district website, and community forums. However, it was not clear whether parents had opportunities to understand the data and involve in their children's education.</p> <p>For these reasons, a low-medium range score is given to this section.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant described that they are committed to making school-level expenditures available to the public. However, where and how the report can be accessed was not described. The district included teacher and instructional support salary tables in the appendices. However, the appendices was not appropriately labeled. Also, the applicant failed to address what kind of data (e.g., incentive pay and/or bonuses, supplementary pay, employee benefits, professional development, instructional materials/supplies, contracted services, and etc.) can be found in the expenditure report.</p> <p>For these reasons, a medium range score is given to this section.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Despite the applicant's claim that they have sufficient autonomy under Sate legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements, the subsequent narrative contradicts this statement. The Narrative focused on their compliance with state and federal regulations. In addition, there was no supporting evidence that explains how their compliance provides successful conditions to implement this proposal. Therefore, a low range score is given to this section.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a wealth of evidence of stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal. It includes parent</p>		

input, student input, teacher input, and support from various community organizations. The support letters, and parent and student input were included. Since the district does not have collective bargaining representative, the district used a teacher survey result as the evidence of teacher agreements. Over 90% of the teachers agreed to participate in the proposed project. However, the applicant missed to include the number of teachers who agreed to participate in the proposed project. Descriptions on how students, families, and teachers were engaged in the proposal development was specific and comprehensive. Actual teacher parent and student input was included in the appendices but the appendices were not properly labeled. For these reasons, a high medium range score is given to this section.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the applicant identified some goal areas, including personalized learning environments, teacher and administrator evaluation, technology infrastructure, and teacher development. The goals may reflect the current needs. However, a high quality plan to analyze needs and gaps that include goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties was absent in the narrative. For this reasons, a low range score is given to this section.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposed interesting plans to address (C)(1)(a). Engaging students and families in student's education planning and goal setting is a sound practice to help students realize the importance of thier learning and develop meaningful educational goals. The applicant also proposed extending current reading recovery program to more grades to deepen student learning. However, the applicant did not provide adequate explanation on what approaches they will take to ensure (C)(1)(a)(iv) and (v).

The applicant assured that students will have access to personalized sequence of learning, high quality instruction, and high quality contents through a variety support. The support includes effective teaching of the state academic standards, systematic implementation of the Common Core State Standards, small group instruction, inquiry method, parenting centers, after school tutoring, and credit recovery courses. However, the rationale for the choice of these supports and the details on what those support will look like were missing.

Although professional development for teachers to effectively support high-needs students was addressed, accommodations for these student were not mentioned. High quality plan that described goals, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible parties were clearly missing.

Approaches to ongoing regular feedback for students lacked the necessary details. Ongoing parent training for using the data system was mentioned but the details were also lacking.

Overall, the applicant tried to address all subcategories of the selection criteria. However, the narrative touches only on the surface of the requirements and lacks convincing details and evidence. For this reason, a low range score is given to this section.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant promised that all participating educators, including teachers and instructional aids will engage in training and professional learning communities to improve their instruction and support students progress toward college and career ready standards. Specific topics of training were presented, including math and English content resources, Socratic methods, project-based learning, inquiry based approaches, digital journals, explicit direct instruction and so on. These can provide a toolbox for teachers to adapt instruction to match individual students' learning needs and interest.

The applicant stated that student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements are measured by analyzing graduation rate. While graduation rate is an important indicator of educational success, it is not sufficient to address teaching quality and individual student needs.

Training on data interpretation and use for instructional staff and administrators was described in the narrative. However, it

was not clear how this training yields actionable information to steer instruction.

Training mentors and partnership with a local university were described for teacher development but it was not clear how these components contribute to providing ongoing feedback to teachers to improve instruction.

The applicant assured that principals contribute to district-wide decision making process. However, how their input is used to improve school progress was not explained.

High quality plan that included goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties was not provided.

For above reasons, a low range score is given to this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan was visibly missing in this section. No goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties have been identified.

The applicant had a plan to facilitate communications between participating schools and the central office by hiring new positions. The applicant clearly stated that the participating schools have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors, such as school schedules and calendars, personnel decisions, and roles and responsibilities for instructional and non-instructional staff to facilitate personalized learning.

While the applicant expressed their commitment to providing students the opportunities to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, there was no supporting evidence on how they are practicing or will practice this.

Academic Plans for Students (APS) was described as a support for students with disabilities or English learners. However, how this resource has impacted and will impact personalized learning for such students was not explained.

Appendices that were references in the narrative were not properly labeled.

For these reasons, a low range score is given on this section.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant provided sufficient information on how they will ensure that the key stakeholders will have access to necessary resources and technical support to support the implementation of the proposed project. Specific examples were presented. Resources will be shared through the Board Trustees meetings, district web page dedicated to the proposed project, PTA, PTO meetings, and media outlets. Consultants and instructional service personnel will be responsible for providing technical support for students, parents, educators and other stakeholders.

A parent portal will allow parents and students to export educational data in an open data format. The district expressed its commitment to transitioning their data systems to become interoperable to include human resources data, student information data, budget, and instructional improvement system data.

The applicant addressed all the subcategories of the selection criteria. Therefore, a high-range score is given to this section.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described the applying district's continuous improvement process. The process involves the annual Strategic

Planning Committee on the district level to review the district's accomplishments, and identify recommendations and modifications. On school-level, schools teams identify building level goals and activities. In regards to the Race to the Top grant project, establishing a task force committee was proposed to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant activities quarterly. The district's existing and proposed review process should sufficiently address the progress of the proposed project.

The applicant specified how the review results will be shared. The formats included annual school reports, parenting workshop, and grant website.

Overall, the applicant reasonably described the improvement process. However, the measures that will be used in the evaluation process were vague. Lastly, the table describing activities and measures was confusing and not relevant. The activities listed were not strictly related to the continuous improvement process. For example, tuition assistance and hiring personnel are not a part of the evaluation process.

For above reasons, a medium range score is given to this section.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant described reasonable ways to engage and communicate with internal and external stakeholders. Through a District web page that is dedicated to the proposed project, public comments, feedback will be gathered and questions will be answered. Providing RTTD updates to parents through monthly parent activities is a great way to reach out to parents and inform them. Monthly board meetings will also allow regular evaluation of the project as well as engagement of key stakeholders. This section was complete and deserves a high score.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant did not meet the criteria for this section. Criteria (a) through (c) have not been addressed at all. The applicant proposed only four performance measures and the performance measure table is poorly organized and not complete. In one table, the baseline year and project year 1 are the same 2012-2013. In other tables, the baseline year was not specified. Annual targets were not set (NA for all years), and student subgroups were not identified. For these reasons, a low range score is given to this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant proposed a reasonable plan to evaluate effectiveness of the grant activities. The effectiveness of the implementation and outcomes will be assessed using a variety of methods, including survey, observations, and assessments. Evaluators are an external evaluator, school leadership team, students, and parents. The district has developed a set of guiding questions that will help the fidelity evaluation. The guiding questions address relevant factors to implementation fidelity, such as activities and timelines, data collection, personnel and communication, and timely administration of student assessments.
 The plan is considered comprehensive because it addresses both the process and the outcomes of the project, and key stakeholders can provide input in the evaluation process. Therefore, a high score is given to this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The presented budget narrative and tables were very confusing. Although the applicant described what goals the fund will support (e.g, use formative assessment for special education students) the narrative really did not describe what resources and activities each goal will entail and how the budget will be allocated for the goal. Personnel positions to be hired and the number of each position were described. However, salary and fringe benefits for each position were not broken down. The applicant included 5 separate budget tables. It was hard to understand why these separate budget tables were necessary. Budget categories did not include itemized costs. Therefore, the decision regarding whether the budget is reasonable and

sufficient could not be made. For these reasons, a low range score is given to this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's sustainability plan included a plan to establish a Sustainability Committee. The committee will convene monthly meetings to seek resources to support the proposed project goals and set realistic expectations. The applicant identified potential private, foundation and other grant funds, and title II funds to support the proposed project activities after the grant term. The applicant provided a sound rationale for the use of title II funds. Title II funds support the vision for high quality instruction for all students. While this plan is a reasonable proposal, the applicant failed to provide specifics, such as timelines, goals, activities, and deliverables. If the applicant was able to present yearly budget estimates for the three years after the grant term and the modifications that are necessary, the plan would have become more realistic. For these reasons, a low-medium range score is given to this section.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described its partnerships with two local postsecondary institutions. The partnership have been successful and contributed to the district's efforts to prepare their students to be college and career-ready. It is believed that the district's relationships with the partners are ongoing and strong. Since all schools in the district serves a high rate of students from low-income families (over 90%), this partnership should meet the competitive priority.

The applicant identified population level desired results are:

- (1) Increased performance in the High School Assessment Program by students with disabilities
- (2) Increased performance by male students
- (3) increased graduation rate and college entrance by the two subgroups.

However, a family and community support result is missing.

The partners seem to have enough capacity to track data related to the outcome indicators. The district reported that the data can be tracked in the district accountability system and also in the partner's own data systems. However, the applicant failed describing how the partnership would use the tracked data to make ongoing improvements.

The applicant stated that the partnership will be scaled up as more high needs students enter the district. It is a reasonable justification given that all high schools in the district are partnering with the higher education institutions.

Although the partnership seems strong and effective, the applicant did not adequately address what they will do to ensure that the partnership will improve even stronger over time. The applicant simply stated that the partnership improved over time and it will.

The applicant reasonably described how the partnership will integrate resources. Examples included academic advising, guidance counseling, psychologist, and speech therapist. These are services that are often available in educational institutions and useful for the student population the applicant targeted. It is a convincing statement.

Partnership and the applying district planned to have additional resources to support the target students and the families. The resources include college information, and a representative. These sound like a feasible plan that will be useful.

Existing performance data was identified as a tool to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school.

A designee was proposed to inform the decision making process to address individual support need. The roles and responsibilities of the designee were not explained.

Creative solutions for parent engagement was not proposed. The applicant simply stated it's commitment to parent engagement.

Routine assessment was addressed but not with enough specifics, such as the frequency or the assessors.

Annual ambitions and achievable performance measures were presented. The applicant used the same targets for the subgroups that were presented in the section (A)(4).

The applicant addressed all the selection criteria for this section. However, insufficient plans were presented for some subcategories. For this reason, a medium range score is given to this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addressed multiple times throughout the application how their goals align with the core educational assurance areas. It seems like the applicant has strong commitment to creating personalized learning environments and preparing their students to be college-and-career ready. The district clearly set goals of improving student achievement, increasing teacher effectiveness, decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing high school graduation rates as their priority areas. However, too often, specific information regarding how they will approach these daunting tasks and how their goals will be measured was vague.

Total	210	77
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposed a project in collaboration with the First Steps and The Parent Child Home Program in the applying district's county to support young children in poor families to develop literacy skills and social-emotional interaction. The goal is very important and does support the Absolute Priority 1. Language and social skills are essential foundation skills for young children to be college and career ready in later years. The proposed project supports Absolute Priority 1 while it is not deemed to adversely affect the implementation of the district's main application, if not funded.

The rationale and the importance of the project were nicely articulated. The applicant emphasized the importance of literacy skills in young children, lack of quality program for the target population, and the size of the impact the project will make, if funded. However, the project was not developed by two or more LEAs. The developers are multiple organizations in one county.

Although the applicant articulated the importance of the project, the timeline and deliverables were missing in the narrative. Therefore, it could not be determined as a high-quality plan.

The proposed budget did not exceed the \$2 million cap. Budget was itemized and comprehensive to be considered as adequate.

For these reasons, a medium range score is given to this section.

Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form



Application #0448SC-3 for Williamsburg County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision as evidenced by;</p> <p>The District has a clear and comprehensive Strategic Plan for years 2010-2016. Evidence of their commitment to this plan include the establishment of data systems to track student achievement and growth, standards and assessment that are aligned with skills necessary for student success in college and career ready environments and allow for the evaluation of teacher effectiveness.</p> <p>Through the use of assessments such as Measure of Academic Progress, Palmetto Assessment of State Standards, High School Achievement Program and other such measures this applicant will be able to monitor student success and use this information to accelerate student achievement as well as provide support to those students in need.</p> <p>The vision is clear and consistent with the goal of focusing resources, both fiscal and Human (Personnel), in a manner that will allow the applicant to tie student achievement to effective instructional practices implemented in the learning environment</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant has identified a systemic-wide approach stating that all public schools in the district will participate in this "Holistic" reform proposal. All schools were listed and the number of participating students in total and by sub group were clearly identified both in narrative and by chart.</p> <p>Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,132 low-income students, high- need disabled students 394. • Percentage of participating low-income students is 91.46% • Total number of low-income population is over 50% at 63.79% district-wide <p>Because the applicant has taken an holistic approach and has been inclusive in their approach to implementing this reform initiative this exemplifies a comprehensive approach. .</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly defines how the reform proposal will be implemented including the use of the individual Graduation Plan for each student beginning in eighth grade. The use of the Individual Graduation Plan provides focus for the comprehensive implementation of this plan. The use of the Professional Teaching Learning Cycle as a tool to ensure alignment of best practices in the areas of professional development and collaboration, use of data driven instructional practices, programmatic decisions, curriculum, instruction and Leadership support systems will ensure consistency across the district. By providing a focused approach to plan implementation, through the use of PTLC, which will provide a consistent approach to district-wide change beyond the participating schools and targeted grade levels.</p> <p>One area of concern is in the area of is the development of a stronger framework for Response to Intervention which was characterized by the applicant as "Unchartered Territory". The applicant has identified a Student intervention Team it appears that integrating that team and associated strategies continues to be a struggle.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set goals for students by sub-groups as well as all students using the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards English Language Arts and Mathematics assessment results. The goal for students in grades 3 through 8 is to raise the base scores by 3% per year. This is quite ambitious when you take in to account the compounding of the base score by 3% over successive years.

(B) Here the applicant has identified a self-contained group of students who will be mainstreamed the following year with one to two hours of scheduled resource classes. These students were identified as being within 10 points for the State achievement standards on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards. This is of concern in that students transitioning from self-contained to mainstream would as a matter of practicality need more than the identified support of one to two hours of resource classes.

(c), (d), (e) The applicant has identified a comprehensive structure of support and collaboration for students in High School. Of particular interest is the South Carolina Course Alignment Project collaborative in which College faculty collaborate with High School faculty as a means of creating greater continuity between exit-level high school course work and entrance -level college expectations in English and Mathematics.

The strategies described in the proposal are comprehensive in that there is a clear structure from early grades implementation through the intermediate levels inclusive of High School and culminating with post-secondary connections and student results. However there is nothing in the proposal that take the curriculum and student achievement targets beyond what the State requires.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated a clear and record of advancing student learning as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased graduation rate from 68.7% in 2009 to 71.& in 2010 and 73% in 2011 however there is a decline in Graduation rate for 2012. This data demonstrates an inconsistent effort resulting in increasing the Graduation rate. The Kingstree High School is a SC Priority school, however the applicant has made significant reform efforts including changing leadership, collaborating with post-secondary institutions and identifying best instructional practices as a means of focusing on increasing student success. The results are less promising in the Elementary and Middle Level programs. of particular concern is the performance of Students with disabilities. This identified population has actually demonstrated a decrease in achievement over the same time period that graduation rates have increased. The results of the Elementary and Middle -level programs have led the district to create Primary Academies for grades 1 and 2 with the goal of increasing the scope of these academies across all grade spans. <p>The applicant has identified on-going reform efforts and associated results that confirm the focus on increasing student achievement with the exception of (SWD) students with disabilities. This section demonstrated an additional lack of district-wide on-going and sustainable improvement in student results.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant adheres with State and Federal reporting regulations related to disclosing comprehensive financial reports as required. The applicant does state that actual non-personnel expenditure at the school level are not available, however they are working on developing an informational system that when used in collaboration with the district Website would allow for the disclosure of this information. The inability to disclose this information is the basis for the reduction in this rating</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>When one looks at the legislative history as outline in this proposal it is clear the State of South Carolina allows for a high</p>		

level of local control over the State educational system. The Education Finance Act (1977), Education improvement Act (1984), the Charter Schools Act (1996), the Education Accountability Act (1998) and the Education and Economic Development Act of (2005) and the South Carolina Virtual Schools Program (2006) all serve as evidence of the commitment of the State to allow the condition for local control of schools.

There is no evidence of autonomy at the local level and in fact the applicant relies on the State mandated legislative record as the focus of their program implementation. This indicates that the applicant is doing what is expected and this plan will support doing more of the same rather than enhancing the current educational structure and learning environment

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

The applicant clearly identifies that South Carolina is a right-to-work State and there is no collective bargaining representation. As stated in the application 98% of educators and personnel agreed to the submission of this proposal. The applicant engaged current faculty, retired faculty, elected student government representatives in forums related to gathering input to the development and submission of this application. Additionally over 200 parents participated in these forums along with representatives from County Library, Mental health, Adult Education, post secondary institutions First Steps and PTO/PTA organizations. Clearly the applicant made a significant effort to engage stakeholders and as demonstrated by the breadth of participants was successful in their effort.

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

The applicant identifies the need for more rigorous (AP) course curricula at the High School level, the development of personal learning environments complete with individual goals and needs, access to deep learning experiences focused on skill development inclusive of goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical-thinking and problem solving.

Additionally; the district will develop a district-wide technology infrastructure that will link data element to student achievement. The purpose of this system is to provide teachers with data about their students and an on-line tool-kit inclusive of curriculum, model lessons, formative assessments and quality professional development activities.

Much of what was identified is what is considered as basic educational programming and there is no effort to expand the program as a means of increasing student achievement. The applicant describes linking data to student achievement but does not describe what the plan is for use of that information.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has outlined a comprehensive process of learning which gradually increases in components and difficulty as a student progress through their educational career. This plan is aligned at all level as evidenced by the focus on Mathematics, Reading and Language usage. In the primary and intermediate levels students will focus on these three areas of learning and achievement will be monitored by formative and summative assessments. At the Middle-Level students will focus on the afore mentioned areas of learning with the addition of student information pertaining to College and Career goals including projects for PSAT and SAT achievement. At the High School level, this plan will add course of Major study, include exposure to diverse cultures and master critical academic content and skill development.

There is a level of coordination and structure in place to the outline identified above. The area of concern is the lack of identification related to plan summation related to post secondary or career readiness choices as related to the achievement/interests of the student upon completion of their High School program. An additional concern is there is no mention of a plan for implementation or establishment of personal learning environments.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified a plan that ensures all staff engages in quality professional development focusing on instructional

strategies such as Socratic method, Inquiry based learning, STEM and others. This system ensures that there is support of effective Teaching and Leadership development. The applicant has identified a collaborative partnership with Francis Marion University as a means of assisting current professional staff in completing Master's degree programs. New teachers are required to attend and participate in a three day Teacher Academy, as well as being assigned a teacher mentor. Teachers and Principals are evaluated using a comprehensive evaluation process tied to student achievement outcomes. All staff are expected to participate in strategic planning and administrators conduct an annual retreat.

The above plan is both comprehensive and focuses on improving teaching and learning however the lack of connection to sustainable increase in student achievement is lacking. The level of collaboration within the system as well as in the development of outside partnerships is evidence of a commitment to increasing systemic change.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has identified several policy changes as related to the establishment of autonomy of schools as related to program implementation. The applicant through the establishment of a RTTT-D program Director, consultants and a graduation coach, of which all will all have access to the District Superintendent, provides the enhancements to the existing infrastructure needed to ensure the plan is implemented with fidelity. Students will be permitted to progress and demonstrate Mastery based on their achievement as indicated in their Individual Graduation Plan.</p> <p>In summary this plan provides the structure by which the organization can monitor and evaluate the systemic needs of the District as they move forward with implementing this program.</p> <p>A major area of concern is there is no connection between policy development and the establishment of strategies that will lead to the creation of personalized learning environments.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has identified a plan for communication inclusive of Monthly updates to the Board of trustees, the use of the student and parent portal on the district Website, the establishment of a separate stand alone RTTT webpage as part of the district's website, Monthly parenting /PTO/PTA meetings which will focus on program implementation. The absence of clear support for parents who do not have access through on-line resources is one area that needs to be addressed in this plan. With the high level of students in-need there is clearly a discrepancy of resource equity within the student population.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies a process by which they use the SMART goals in an effort to increase student achievement and improve teacher effectiveness. The Strategic Planning committee consisting of school members, parents and County Government officials clearly provides the mechanism necessary for on-going plan evaluation and the identification of any changes needed based on data related to student achievement. The concern here is that while there is a process and a schedule for public forums, the applicant did not identify strategies to engage the "reluctant" or non-engaged segment of the community in these discussions. Public meetings and discussions are excellent but the need to have a plan for a high level of community engagement inclusive of the difficult to reach population is a must.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is a comprehensive plan for engaging all stakeholders inclusive of County government. The reality of dealing with a high</p>		

level of students in poverty is often times those are the families that are reluctant or lack the resources needed (Transportation, Technology device, Internet access) to become engaged or involved. This plan has no strategy for engaging that population and in fact the reliance on public meetings and on-line resources as a means of communication will not address these families.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant provided a comprehensive chart of performance measures there is no explanation of how these measures were chosen, or how they will address the results as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of program implementation. There is no supporting data for the charts or explanation of the information in the charts. The information provided in the chart is incoherent and incomplete as evidenced by the lack of the required number of performance indicators.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies processed based and outcomes based evaluation as the means of monitoring the effectiveness of the plan. There are a series of "Guiding questions" identified within the proposal that will be used to both evaluate process and outcomes. The applicant identifies surveys, observation student results on formative and summative assessments as data that will be the focus of these evaluations. This was rather broad in scope and lacked specific indicators that will be used for monitoring plan implementation. Some of the information that was referred to in this section is quite subjective and lacking any accountability other than the summative and formative assessment information.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant identifies the rationale for the budget stating that this program will support reform by the hiring of support personnel to assist in turning around our lowest performing schools. Specialized support personnel will work with the existing leadership team and staff designing strategies with the focus on implementation of the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle. The budget is inclusive of a Program Director, Graduation Coach, Data Analyst, Reading Recovery support, Elementary and Secondary Mathematics and ELA support personnel. The budget supports plan implementation as evidenced by the strategic selection of both administrative and academic support positions. Additionally the budget supports expansion and targeted development of the district data system which will assist with analyzing student results as connecting those results with best practices as defined by the teacher evaluation system. While there is clarity as to the expenditures the ability to sustain the personnel positions included in this budget is not defined or identified. Some of the expenditures seem to be used to support programs that are already in place.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant rightly identifies that the professional development, establishment of Professional Learning Communities, development of the scaffolding system of monitoring student progress inclusive of the Individual Graduation Plan and connections established with community agencies will remain in place as part of systemic reform well after the funding of the grant has been exhausted. An area of concern is there is no mention of how the administrative and support staff would be maintained other than to explore other grants and "Seeking private, foundation support". Additionally, The focus of this program is to sustain the current educational effort in the district which has produced mixed student achievement results at best.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)



	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies partnerships with Williamsburg Technical College and Francis Marion University. The collaboration effort with Williamsburg Technical College has tow very specific and valuable objectives. First is to implement career/college ready standards for instruction. This will assist Staff in identifying those exist skills students will need as they transition to a post-secondary career. Second is to increase rates at which students graduate form high School and prepare for College and Career. This is a critical area of need as identified by the graduation data especially for Kingstree Senior High School.</p> <p>The collaboration with Francis Marion University will provide Professional Development opportunity and support for instructional staff. Specifically The Center for Poverty which will provide professional development related to issues and strategies for working with high need students. This is definite need identified in the data as evidenced by the fact that more than 60% of the students qualify as receiving subsidized meals.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This plan meets the absolute priority as documented throughout this evaluation. There is a comprehensive plan for monitoring student achievement and increasing student success rates, providing focused professional development for staff, The existence of a professional staff evaluation system tied to student outcomes and partnerships with community agencies inclusive of post-secondary institutions.</p>		

Total	210	119
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