



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0238CO-1 for Adams-Arapahoe 28J

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 provides a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the four assurances. The applicant refers to the VISTA 2015 plan. This plan is to develop a stronger sense of engagement with its community and partnerships. The applicant details that this plan will align academic and economic development to address the partnership efforts that can be created to prepare students for college and career opportunities. The applicant details their approach to building a data system that will measure student growth. The applicant outlines that the data system will consolidate all other data systems and will utilize system-wide as a single location of assessment, planning, and evaluation. The applicant proposes the development of a Director of Student Achievement position to address the areas of turning around lowest performing schools. The applicant details that the director will guide the school leadership team in identifying major root causes and improvement strategies alignment.</p> <p>The applicant is transitioning from the former curriculum to the Common Core Curriculum. This transition will include the implementation of Colorado Academic Standards and the new PARCC assessment. The applicant references adopting an achievement plan for students that is aligned from preschool to college entry. To facilitate the career and academic goals, the applicant will have students complete an Individual Career and Academic Plan. This plan will serve as a guide for the students beginning in middle school until graduation. The applicant also has outlined a credible process with incorporating a data system in which they will be able to consolidate multiple data systems including, but not limited to, attendance, state data, and parental participation. The applicant outlines the process of recruiting and developing their teachers. The process is guided by the Licensed Personnel Recruitment Strategy. This strategy is effective because it outlines a plan to target multiple approaches to locate and attract teachers. To address the issue of turning around low-performing schools, the applicant indicates that the schools will have a School Leadership Team. This team will be responsible for identifying root causes and improvement strategies. In addition, the team will create an Unified Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The applicant provides a convincing argument that Argumentative Literacy will be the guiding strategy that helps all students achieve and be successful. Through the implementation of Argumentative Literacy, the classroom will be a place where students are encouraged to explore. In addition, there are going to be numerous opportunities to incorporate technology within teachers' lessons. Students will the opportunity to lead exploratory learning and conduct research. The applicant provides sufficient information outlining how the reform vision builds on the core assurances. The applicant receives a score of 10 out of 10.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a thoughtful approach to school selection and implementation. The applicant outlines that a needs assessment was conducted in order to gather information. To determine which campuses would be best prepared to begin implementing the AL model in Year 1, the applicant conducted a needs assessment. The applicant indicated that priority would be given to those schools demonstrating a need for turnaround. During Year Two and Three, the applicant will select schools based on a combination of student achievement and school-wide readiness for implementation. The applicant indicates that priority will be given to schools that demonstrate the highest need for turnaround, and those schools with the greatest proficiency and growth gaps. At the end of the first three years, all middle and high schools would be included. This will support high-quality implementation because it is a consistent and focused approach. The applicant also provides a chart that includes the total number of students from low-income families; high needs students, and participating educators of schools in the pilot. The applicant outlines a process to identify and select schools to participate. The approach that is outlined is both fair and credible. The applicant receives a score of 10 out of 10.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a high quality plan that describes how the proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. The applicant identifies that instructional model that incorporates the LEARN components will facilitate the Common Core approach. For each of the activities, the applicant describes the activity well and includes the rationale. However, the deliverables for some of the activities were not clearly identified or were unclear. The applicant outlines the process to scale up to middle and high schools that are not included in the first year pilot. However, the applicant does not address the scale up plan to address the elementary schools. In addition, the applicant does not provide data that justifies the reason that middle and high schools were selected. While the applicant provides most elements of a high-quality plan for district-wide reform, the omission of the deliverables results in a score of 8 out of 10.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for LEA, overall and by student subgroup. The applicant provides a convincing rational vision that is likely to result in improved student learning. The approach of using Argumentative Literacy is all encompassing because it requires the students to use a variety of high-level thinking skills. For each of the identified areas, the applicant has outlined some ambitious, yet achievable goals. The student achievement goals are considered ambitious because in most areas the achievement increases two to four percent in proficiency each year. Over past four years, the students' performance have either remained the same or decreased. Given the applicant's prior history, this would represent significant progress for this low-performing district. These goals are achievable because of the considerable focus on developing analytical and critical thinking skills and additional support for reading and comprehension skill building through the Argumentative Literacy model. The applicant establishes that these goals were set to either equal or exceed the state's targets.</p> <p>The applicant provides a chart illustrating the achievement gaps. However, it was difficult to figure out whether the goals related to achievement gaps were ambitious or achievable. For example, the applicant provides a baseline number (-30) and an ending target (-3), but an explanation is not provided to explain what the numbers represent. The chart is unclear whether the comparison group represents all students across the state, or all students within that subgroup. In addition, it also unclear whether the comparison groups of ELL and FRL are from the district or across the state. It would appear that the goals are ambitious and achievable, because the applicant proposes to decrease the achievement gap at a rate of three or four percentage points each year. This is ambitious because they are proposing to go from a low-performing status to performing at the state average, which will be significant reduction. The proposal seems strong enough to indicate that the goals would be achievable due to the implementation of the Argumentative Literacy program which would enable subgroups grow at a rate that would outpace growth across the state.</p> <p>The performance goals for graduation rates were ambitious, yet achievable for overall and most of the subgroup categories. The applicant outlined an overall increase of four percentage points each year with the exception of the final year, in which they set a goal for a six percent increase. The combined total for increasing graduation rates went from 52% to 70%. The areas of concern that would be considered not achievable were Native American, Native Hawaiian, and English Language Learners. The applicant identified these subgroup areas an increase of 20% or more over the grant period. When looking at the prior history, these groups have actually decreased at a rate of two or three percent per year.</p> <p>The college enrollment rate achievement goals are ambitious and achievable for most of the categories. The applicant details that the expected rate of increase for Asian students will increase approximately two percentage points each year. This group of students have demonstrated an increase of five percent in previous year. For the areas of Free/Reduced Lunch and English Language Learners do not seem achievable. The Free/Reduced Lunch and ELL students have demonstrated a decrease in college enrollment when looking at the prior history. The applicant is inconsistent in identifying ambitious, yet achievable goals, especially when addressing specific subgroup areas. The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals however, the applicant did not outline a clear approach when describing the achievement gaps and included questionable goals for some of the subgroups. As a result, the applicant receives a medium score of 7 out of 10.</p>		
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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 applicant provides an adequate record of success over the past four years. The applicant outlines they increased at a greater rate than the state on the TCAP. Also the applicant has slightly reduced the achievement gap between Hispanics and Whites. The applicant provided information on the dollar amount of scholarships, however, failed to describe the actual percentage or number of students that followed through by enrolling in a two or four-year university. The applicant did not clearly provide evidence addressing the college enrollment rate.

The applicant details two particular approaches that have been implemented in order to turn around low-performing schools. The first example of Fifth Block of Instruction is summer school with a different name. The addition of summer schools does not adequately address the deficiency that is present in low-performing schools, nor does it represent an ambitious and significant reform. Summer school is an approach that most schools have available, low performing or not. The second approach of Career Pathway program is unclear. The applicant did not describe the components that comprise the Career Pathway program. In addition, the applicant did an inadequate job of providing sufficient documentation that this program was unique and implemented primarily to turn around low-performing schools.

The applicant documents programs that provide students' data to teachers and parents. The three programs highlighted by the applicant were Infinite Campus, Parent Portals, and Acuity System. The applicant does an inadequate job of explaining exactly the purpose of the data systems. It is unclear how each of the program specifically link to improving participation instruction, and services. The applicant proposes to implement a program that is an instructional management system. This system will allow parents to have real-time access to student information. This system should enhance their communication of data between students, parents, and teachers. Even though the applicant does not identify a specific program, they outline the desired characteristics. The characteristics they outlined would be a sufficient manner to communicate data to these three groups. The applicant provides documentation that clearly demonstrates a track record of success. However, the applicant does not adequately address the areas of turning around low-performing schools. As a result, the applicant receives a score of 11 out of 15.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a high level of transparency in LEA processes through the use of the local website and the budget book. The applicant provides a screenshot of the website to substantiate what is being shared in their LEA. On this website the applicant provides the current and past years budget, annual financial reports, quarterly reports, and salary schedule for classified and professional staff. The personnel salaries for instructional staff, teachers, and non personnel expenditures is displayed in the budget book. The applicant provides information that outlines where the salaries are located within the budget book. In addition, the applicant describes how the listing of these items is in accordance to the guidelines set forth by the Colorado Department of Education. The applicant clearly demonstrates a high level of transparency through the use of their website and budget book. In addition, the applicant substantiates their claim through providing a screen shot of the website. The applicant exceeds the minimum requirement by providing ample information to describe how and where school-level expenditure data is made available resulting in a high score for its level of transparency. As a result, the applicant receives 5 out of 5.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines various instances in which the Aurora Public School District has clearly been successful through operating under the State requirements to implement a personalized learning environment. The content standards and alignment was revised due to the Colorado Achievement Plan (Cap4K). The applicant outline that through adherence to this plan they have created multiple curricular pathways to accommodate varying interests and developed school readiness assessments. In response to SB 10-191, APS has developed a Teacher and Principal Evaluation system. In addition, it has a state data system titled Relevant Information to Strengthen Education. This information will be valuable when analyzing data to discern where the highly effective teachers and principals are, what are the strongest areas, and how can they develop their other teachers and principals to become highly effective in an effort to personalized learning. In addition, the district has implemented the ICAP, which prepares students for college and career aspirations. The applicant describes a process in which the district uses the ICAP efficiently where it helps the students, families, and teachers make the most appropriate decision for the student. Finally, in compliance with the 2009 Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act, APS has extended the college enrollment possibilities to all eligible, high school students. In addition, it has also created the first fifth year dual degree program to enhance the personalized learning environment. The applicant exceeds the requirement by clearly detailing how it has been successful through operating under the State requirements to implement a personalized learning environment. As a result, the applicant receives a score of 10 out of 10.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. In an effort to incorporate stakeholder feedback, the applicant created an intensive needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment was to determine the potential of the project and elicit feedback for stakeholders. This provided meaningful engagement to allow the stakeholders to provide feedback regarding the proposal. The applicant created a personalized learning team. The applicant details that the personalized learning team was comprised of various stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, university officials, and parents. The main purpose of this team was to provide guidance and oversight during the development of the proposal. This personalized learning team met twice a week to review the application on integrating Argumentative Literacy. The applicant details that the ideas suggested by the team were placed in the application and the conversation continued for approximately eight weeks. In addition, the team members served as information distributors communicating with the public.</p> <p>The applicant details that multiple stakeholders had an opportunity to provide feedback. The applicant includes letters of support from the president of the local teacher's association. The applicant also included letters of support from groups such as Colorado Department of Education, local and national government officials, Universities, and foundations.</p> <p>The applicant includes multiple stakeholders from various levels including local organizations to national government. The applicant did not include input from student organizations, nor early learning centers. The applicant provides a letter of support for the president of the union, but does not provide information about how it was communicated with the teachers.</p> <p>The applicant meets the minimum requirement by providing ample information to describe meaningful stakeholder engagement, but lacks tangible evidence that supports the letter from the president of the union. In addition, the applicant does not provide an opportunity for students and early learning centers to provide feedback. As a result, the applicant receives a medium-high score of 11 out of 15 score.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The applicant outlines a list of high-quality instructional approaches. The applicant address the approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners through proposing the implementation of Argumentative Literacy and the LEARN instructional model. Argumentative literacy was developed in order to provide deeper learning experiences for students. The applicant also will implement the Individual Career and Academic Plans for middle and high school students. The ICAP is an excellent way to monitor the students' growth and the progress to graduating and becoming college and career graduation requirements. The applicant details how teachers will implement the Positive Behavioral Support program in an effort to improve their performance and communication skills.</p> <p>The applicant provides an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners. The applicant will utilize the ICAP program as a means to detail the unique learning goals of each student. Parents and educators will have opportunities to provide input on a quarterly basis. The applicant details the use of professional learning communities to support and develop high-quality instructional approaches associated with argumentative literacy. The argumentative literacy approach will provide students with multiple hands-on learning opportunities. The applicant also will use Pathways to embed 21st century learning skills. At each grade band, the focus will be change for the students. For students in PreSchool through Fifth Grade the focus will be on foundational academic core learning. Students in grades six through eight, the focus will be investigating careers with similar skills. For students in grades nine through twelve, the focus will be on extending learning opportunities to provide relevance and real work experiences.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide evidence of data systems where performance data would be provided to the teacher in a timely fashion that would have some kind of impact on the teaching strategies that could be used to make the student successful in the learning environment. The applicant references the Personalized Learning Team and the ICAP. Both of these ideas were explained in previous sections. However, as previously mentioned, the ICAP does not address specific learning needs of the students that can be carried over into the classroom. The applicant did provide adequate rationale for the use of the debate format through the citing of the research. In addition, the applicant did not adequately address the item of how the student would structure their learning to achieve their goals. The applicant meets the requirement by</p>		

providing a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching, but lacks tangible evidence of data systems that will provide student information in a timely fashion and an approach to how the student will structure their learning to achieve their goals. The applicant's high-quality plan includes key goals, activities, rationale, deliverables, responsible parties, and timelines. The applicant receives a score of 16 out of 20.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching. The applicant provides multiple opportunities for teachers to continuously improve in the art of teaching. Teachers will engage in ongoing training and professional learning communities. The applicant also details that the teachers will have an opportunity to participate in Argumentative Literacy training and on-site coaching. In addition, the teachers will have 24/7 access to the online PLC portal. More specifically, the professional development opportunities will provide teachers with various approaches such as hands-on learning, student-led investigations, and large group instruction. The applicant provides information on how it will frequently measure student progress. The applicant outlines that all student-level data will be tracked through a data management system. The data will be funneled into the students' ICAP. The applicant provides a detailed description of the approach with improving the effectiveness of teachers and principals.

The applicant details how the teachers will have access to the appropriate tools and resources to accelerate student progress. The applicant outlines how the APS instructional model produces a continuous cycle of instructional improvement. The cycle is facilitated through the root cause analysis and providing the appropriate interventions. The applicant also details the Learner Response System. The Learner Response System will increase student engagement and interest through the use of technology. The applicant also details the interactive learning management platform. This platform will provide valuable data to students and teachers that will allow students have quicker feedback. The applicant details how the teachers will have access to high-quality learning resources such as Promethean Boards, online educational software, and document cameras.

The applicant details various types of resources and data that will enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets student academic needs. The applicant references the Licensed Educator Evaluation System tool. This tool will allow administrators to assess and take steps to improve educator effectiveness. The applicant also outlines how each school will receive a Unified Improvement Plan. This plan outlines progress in the areas of academic achievement, academic growth, and growth gaps. The applicant also identifies trainings that will facilitate the continuous improvement of school progress. The applicant will provide over 300 hours of professional development in the areas of increasing student performance and closing the achievement gaps. In addition, personnel will have an opportunity to take in trainings in the areas of cognitive demand and power school leadership.

The applicant provides a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students that receive instruction from highly effective and effective teachers and principals. The applicant details a License Personnel Recruitment Strategy document. This document provides a detailed process that personnel follow in order to recruit teachers. Also the applicant details how the APS uses the Internet to attract and hire teachers. The applicant outlines how the district is committed to establishing a partnership with higher education program and their participation in teacher education fairs.

The applicant provides a quality plan to improve teaching and leading. The applicant's high-quality plan includes key goals, activities, rationale, deliverables, responsible parties, and timelines. The applicant provides information outlining how teachers will continuously improve and the resources that they will have available to them. However, the applicant failed to outline the approach that is taken to address cultural areas. These areas are vital to overall student achievement and school improvement. The applicant provides a comprehensive approach to trainings, systems, and practices that are followed or implemented to facilitate continuously improve the district. The trainings addressed key areas for teachers and administrators. The applicant receives a 18 out of 20.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need. The applicant outlines the practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. The applicant details that the current structure only allows for special-labeled schools make site-based decisions. However, through the implementation of the grant, the applicant indicates that most, if not all, schools will have the flexibility to make educational decisions. The pilot schools will have increased control over budget, design of instruction, schedules, and staffing decisions. This will be important due to the fact the people that are closest to the students are the ones well-equipped to make decisions.

The governance structure is organized in a manner in which support and services will be provided to all participating schools. The applicant details that the Board of Education is a group of citizens that provide leadership and establish policies. The applicant continues by describing how the Leadership Team determines the strategic direction of the district and oversees the operational functions of the school system. The Leadership Team is comprised of vital members, each with specific duties that will ensure that the funding will be used for personalized learning. In addition, the overarching governance structure, Board of Education, receives timely updates as a form of checks and balances.

The applicant details that APS will use standards based grading in order to assess students' work. The applicant believes that this approach will provide them with the appropriate information about what students know compared to the standards. In addition, the applicant will provide students to demonstrate mastery by administering Interim Assessments three times a year for students in Grades Three through Ten. The applicant identifies instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to students. The most noteworthy being Response to Intervention. The applicant also outlines that they will provide resources to improve instructional practices, professional learning, and adaptive note-taking.

The applicant provides a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need. The applicant exceeds the requirement by providing ample information describing the high-quality plan to support project implementation. As a result, the applicant receives a high score 15 out of 15.

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

The applicant outlines a high-quality plan that supports project implementation through comprehensive infrastructure that provides stakeholders with appropriate resources and supports. The applicant outlines that Argumentative Literacy is an approach that is adaptable and provides personalized learning opportunities. To facilitate this transition to Argumentative Literacy, the applicant will provide extensive training so that teachers are familiar with Argumentative Literacy. The applicant identifies multiple avenues in which the district is taking steps to ensure that all stakeholders have access to learning resources. The applicant details that most APS schools will be opened during the evening hours to allow families to use the media center on-site. Technology will be available to those families that may not be able to afford it. This will provide the opportunity that all parents have an opportunity to track their child's progress on ICAP and other data warehousing systems. The applicant details a system to support families that may have technical support needs. The applicant will provide an APS Technician and Application Specialist. The applicant has access to a various systems that can convey vital data or information such as Naviance, Acuity, Enrich, Schoology just to name a few. The applicant details that the data management system will be interoperable with all data collection systems. In addition, the New Learner Response Technology system will use an interactive learning management platform that will be connected directly to the APS Data Management system. The applicant is definitely well-equipped to share data in a manner that is useful to the students, parents, and teachers. Not only does it have the ability to share data, the applicant is investigating ways to make the data more easily accessible. The applicant exceeds the requirement by providing a high quality plan to support project implementation through a comprehensive infrastructure that provides stakeholders with the appropriate resources, resulting in a high score. The applicant receives a score of 10 out of 10.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies the goals in the high-quality plan to continuously improve its plans. The applicant details the LEARN plan as a means to receive qualitative and quantitative feedback through implementation. The applicant also provides many structural supports that will be in place in order to provide an approach that will facilitate continuous improvement. The applicant details that the Director will teleconference with principals on a monthly basis to provide and receive updates on progress. In addition, the applicant indicates that the Personalized Learning Team will review quarterly progress reports compiled by the External Evaluation Team. The Personalized Learning Team will provide suggestions for refining, strengthening, and improving the project. The applicant provides MOU's signed by each project partner that specifically outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each of the partners. The applicant provides the necessary components that are required for a high quality plan. The applicant identifies the person(s) that will be responsible for implementing the goals. However, the applicant fails to clearly identify the timeline and rationale for most, if not all, of the activities. The applicant provides a flowchart that summarizes the process of feedback, however, it did not serve the intended purpose due to its confusing nature. It was confusing because it was hard to follow and to understand the purpose of each component. The applicant intends on using the website, teleconferencing, and quarterly reports as a means of delivering and receiving feedback. The applicant meets the minimum requirement by providing a high-quality plan to continuously improve, but lacks evidence that supports the timeline and rationale for some of the goals. As a result, the applicant receives a low-high score of 12 out of 15.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant outlines that in order to facilitate communication, the development and communication with groups such as community workforce teams, pathway advisory committees, town hall meetings, parental groups, and students clubs will be maintained. The applicant outlines a plan in which ongoing communication will be facilitated through using different means of communication. The Personalize Learning Team will be overseeing the grant and will be in charge with continual communications and status reports to the Board of Education, community partners, and internal staff. In addition, the applicant proposes to use community teams, advisory committees, consortiums, town hall meetings, and parental groups. Also, the applicant outlines that stakeholders will be informed through regular teleconference meetings, email, phone conversations, and quarterly in-person meetings. The applicant cites the APS policies that mandates that parents have to be an involved part in the planning process and need to be provided with regular updates. This plan is all-inclusive and incorporates an adequate number of internal and external stakeholders. The applicant receives a score of 5 out of 5.

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

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some ambitious performance measures. However, only a couple goals that address the subgroups may not be achievable. Majority of the goals the applicant outlines provides an achievable rate of progress for each subsequent year. Rationale for each of the measures is provided. For example, the applicant explains that the ACT assessment provides data that will show the probability of their student being successful in college courses. The applicant explains that the Transition Colorado Assessment Program will be used to assess the students in elementary and middle grades; however, they will transition to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The applicant explains that when this is implemented, they will use the diagnostic and interim assessments, associated with PARCC, to provide formative data. The PARCC will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information to help with addressing areas of concern.

The applicant provides ambitious and achievable goals. For example, in Grade Eight, the target is to increase at a rate of four percentage points each year in the area of mathematics performance on the TCAP. This data will provide feedback on a student progress, however, the data will only be available once a year. As a result, the measure will not provide timely and formative leading information to enable teachers to address areas of concern. In addition, the applicant provides some questionable targets within the performance measure portion of the plan. For example, ELL students in sixth through eighth grade are expected to make a four percent increase during the first five years. However, during the last year, they are expected to make a 24% increase during the post-grant year. The applicant does not provide rationale for this sudden increase in performance.

The applicant provides rationale for the use of assessments. In addition, the applicant meets the minimum requirement by providing a high-quality plan to continuously improve its plan, however, does not provide an explanation for some performance measures. As a result, the applicant receives a score of 4 out of 5.

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

The applicant outlines a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTT-D funded activities, such as professional development. The applicant outlines a plan that has all of the appropriate components for a high-quality plan. The applicant indicates that the evaluation of the LEARN program involves an initial participant assessment of the training program. The applicant explains that the GSU Research Study team will design the surveys to assess understanding of the program. The survey results will be used to revise training programs at subsequent training events. The applicant will also track the participation in the LEARN program. The applicant's Project Director will collect data to look at teacher's attendance, lesson plans, and teacher's participation in after-school coaching sessions. In addition, the applicant details that the evaluation team will conduct a quasi-experimental method to assess differences between students who participate in LEARN program and those who do not. The applicant continues by explaining that a second analysis will estimate any additional benefits to after-school participants. The applicant provides the description of steps, timeline, key personnel, deliverables, and implementation benchmarks. The applicant outlines a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTT-D funded activities, such as professional development. As a result, the applicant receives a high score of 5 out of 5.

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 provides a comprehensive budget that is geared toward making strategic improvements in learning and teaching. The budget outlines specific items and is outlined in each section based on the categories. This makes the budget easy to follow and interpret. The applicant provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. For example, the applicant outline the specific responsibilities of positions such as the LEARN Technician and the IT Application Specialist. The total amount dedicated to operate this program will be approximately 19 million dollars. The major budget items primarily focus on personnel, professional development, and supplies. The applicant provides justification for each of the budget items. All of these are appropriate in that they are essential to student learning, operating, or evaluating the program. The concerning aspect regarding the budget is the number additional personnel that is needed to start the project. This will become an issue at the end of the grant cycle. This reviewer concludes that it would be beneficial for the applicant to have various sources in place that could assume some of the personnel costs, however, the applicant does not provide this information. Overall, the applicant details an adequate budget. The applicant scores a 7 out of 10.

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

The applicant provides a quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant outlines the Personalized Learning Team will prepare a timeline and a list of action items for approaching each source of funding. The applicant proposes a budget that will cover expenses after the life of the grant is finished. The budget includes numerous positions being eliminated. Does not include a means in which additional funding is going to be legitimately pursued. The budget does not focus on sustainability, but more like downsizing. The applicant outlines that the evaluation team will document successes over the four-year period. The applicant outlines that the LEARN instructional coaches will continue to use the classroom observation instrument. The applicant did not present a credible plan in their efforts to sustain the project goals after the RTTT-D funding. The applicant meets the minimum requirement by providing the elements of a high-quality plan to continuously improve, but lacks evidence that supports the sustainability for some of the goals due to downsizing, which impacts the overall credibility of their plan to sustain the project goals after the RTTT-D funding. As a result, the applicant receives a high-medium score of 7 out of 10.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal includes an integration of public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high needs. The applicant proposes to integrate resources in a partnership designed to provide student and family supports to schools to address the needs of participating students. The applicant has identified that the district will form a partnership with Denver Urban Debate League. The DUDL would seem to be a perfect partnership based on the connection with Argumentative Literacy. The DUDL fosters education over competition, which aligns with APD vision. The applicant identifies seven desired results for the students. However, the important component of including family community supports was omitted. The applicant details that DUDL will be a member of the Personalized Learning Team for the term of the grant. DUDL will integrate educational, socio-emotional, and behavioral strategies. In addition, the applicant outlines that DUDL will meet frequently with the LEARN project leadership team in an effort to identify and inventory the needs of the school. The applicant details an approach to maximize impact in which they will engage teachers and principals on LEARN strategies. In addition, the applicant will closely monitor on-time graduation and concurrent enrollment. The applicant's proposal includes an integration of public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports, however, the applicant did not address the family community supports in the population-desired results. As a result of this omission, the applicant receives a score of 8 out of 10.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant comprehensively addressed how it would build on the core educational assurances. In the area of adopting standards and assessments, the applicant addresses the transition to PARCC. In addressing the data systems to measure student growth and success, the applicant includes a plethora of web-based systems that are capable of housing and sharing appropriate data with stakeholders. The applicant outlines the approach of PLCs in which teachers and administrators will be able to develop and collaborate with one another on a consistent basis to discuss excellent teaching strategies and approaches. In addition, the applicant is clearly committed to retaining the teachers through the extensive preparedness program that they are proposing. The clear record of performance at some of the lowest performing schools demonstrates that the applicant clearly has a sure approach to improving low-performing schools. The applicant clearly meets Absolute Priority 1 through the details provided in this application.

Total	210	179
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0238CO-2 for Adams-Arapahoe 28J

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>(A)(1) Aurora Public School (APS) has clearly articulated its ideas and rationale, including relevant research, in choosing to use <u>Argumentative Literacy instructional strategy</u> to reform its schools.</p> <p>(a) APS has clearly identified its plan for Project L.E.A.R.N. to: (1) build upon its current standards (CAS), which is a combined State and Common Core standards; (2) improve on its current data systems by implementing an interactive learning management platform; (3) use the Vista 2015 district strategic plan as a means to recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers and principals, and utilize the Licensed Educator Evaluation System for teacher evaluations and the Principal Leadership Project to improve principals; and, (4) a focus of academic improvement in its low performing middle and high schools, as identified by School Performance Framework scores.</p> <p>(b) APS has provided evidence that its plan of using the Argumentative Literacy Instructional Strategy to improve academic scores has worked with other reform programs, as proven in studies (e.g., Georgia State Advanced Debate and Advocacy Project; Linda Collier in Chicago, Kansas City, New York, St. Louis, and Seattle; and, Chicago Public School district college-readiness program), and has thoroughly described in the application how its approach of Argumentative Literacy has cross-curricular components that will align with student academic interests. APS has described how the components of what was done in other studies will be implemented in Project L.E.A.R.N.</p> <p>(c) The applicant has clearly described the classroom in which an 'Argumentative Literacy Instructional Strategy' will be used to personalized learning (e.g., digital tools for access to research, writing, social networking, etc.).</p> <p>APS has provided a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that adequately addresses the criterion; therefore, total points were awarded.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(2) Applicant has clearly described the approach to RTT-D Implementation.</p> <p>(a) The applicant has identified a feasible plan to implement the Argumentative Literacy project. The applicant describes how all middle schools and high schools will participate in the RTT-D grant program, but applicant will use a 3-Tier approach of adding participating schools to the program throughout the first three years of the grant. The applicant has provided a feasible explanation of how the three groups of schools will be scaled into the project. Tier 1 schools have been identified in the application. These schools will implement the project activities immediately following grant award. These six schools collectively have a 65% or higher free and reduced lunch rate and also were chosen using a needs assessment. Tier 2 schools (8) and Tier 3 schools (8) will join the program the second year and third year of the grant. The applicant states that Tier 2 and Tier 3 schools would be selected on a combination of school performance and school-wide readiness for implementation.</p> <p>(b) The applicant has provided a list of the schools (20) that will participate in grant activities and has used the table template provided in the application to identify the school and its demographics.</p> <p>(c) The applicant has provided within the table the total number of participating students (26,209), participating students from low-income families (11,188), participating students who are high-need students (16,724), and participating educators (923).</p> <p>APS has provided sufficient evidence that it has thoughtfully planned out how it plans to implement its reform initiative. Because of the large number of students and teachers served by this project, the 3-Tier approach of adding schools to the project in each of the first three years makes sense when implementing this kind of reform initiative.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(3) Applicant has supplied a clear, high-quality plan that addresses its goals of providing students, beginning in the middle school grades and throughout the high school years, the intelligent behaviors necessary for college readiness, and the ability to synthesize and apply content knowledge. The plan <u>briefly</u> describes the kinds of activities planned to build a foundation for college -and -career readiness, and has identified the responsible parties (The Personal Learning Team)</p>		

who will choose the schools that will participate in the first year of implementation. The plan addresses a timeline to implement the 3-Tier approach during the first three years of the grant. The applicant has provided rationale that its scaled up plan of adding schools each year of the grant for the first three years would likely lead to results that all APS middle and high schools would fully be prepared with all necessary tools, technologies, training and resources needed to sustain district-wide 6-12 implementation of the Argumentative Literacy instructional strategy.

The applicant's focus on implementing the argumentative literacy strategy in the district's middle schools and high schools. The needs assessment supports this plan, and the data provided from other studies also supports this type of reform initiative for those grade levels served in middle and high schools. Through the 3-Tier selection process, by the third year of the grant, the reform initiative will be scaled up to include all middle schools and high schools within the district. The applicant did not provide any indication that they plan to use what is learned during this grant and extend that learning beyond the schools that were funded. The applicant chose not to include data from the elementary schools, so it is difficult to determine if there are gaps in these grades that would make it difficult for this initiative to be supported district-wide, or if they plan to incorporate what they learned from the personalized learning approach and implement it into the elementary schools so that eventually there would be a sustainable district-wide change.

Because the deliverables of the activities were not clearly defined, and the support for district-wide change not provided, two points were deducted.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4) Applicant has provided complete tables documenting its overall, and by student subgroup data, with current proficiency status, achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. It has provided annual targets, but it's unclear as to the rationale of the established targets or the expected goals. The applicant also addressed the optional criteria of postsecondary degree attainment projections.

(a) Applicant stated that the academic performance targets were determined by meeting or exceeding the state averages for overall performance and for each subgroup. Although a track record showed that over the past few years APS has exceeded the overall State proficiency rate by over 3%, the applicant did not provide rationale for determining its target for the percent of increase from one year to the next for the overall group of students and for each subgroup of student populations represented in the schools.

(b) Applicant provided data on achievement gaps for math, science, reading and writing. Although applicant provided targets, it did not supply rationale for determining these targets for decreasing achievement.

(c) Applicant provided baseline graduation rates and also annual as well as post-grant targets. Rationale was not provided on how projection graduation rates were determined.

(d) Applicant provided college enrollment data, and also annual as well as post-grant targets. Rationale was not provided on how projection college enrollment rates were determined.

(e) Applicant provided goals for postsecondary degrees.

The applicant did a thorough job in providing baseline data, targets and overall goals and presented this in tables. It is feasible that these goals will most likely be reached considering the focus of the grant in relationship to the science-based research studies that support the innovative strategies that will be used in this reform effort. There was evidence provided in the studies that schools using the argumentative literacy strategy had increases in academic achievement.

The applicant also has a track record over the past several years of increasing its TCAP proficiency scores by 5.2% over the State average increase of 2.1%. Based off of this track record, it seems likely that the goals are achievable. The targets are somewhat ambitious; the applicant states that APS has been exceeding the targets with the overall group. The applicant also wants to exceed the State proficiency rate in the sub-groups too, but the applicant does not provide the State's rate of proficiency so it is hard to determine if the increase in the range scores from 2% to 4% for sub-groups is ambitious. The applicant also did not provide data on the effectiveness levels of its teachers, so it was difficult to determine if the instruction would be of quality to support this increase in proficiency.

There was points deducted because there was little to no rationale provided by the applicant to tell the process of how the goals were chosen for the criterion listed above, and State targets were not provided to draw any assumptions. The score fell in the upper-mid range.

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B)(1) APS has demonstrated successes in the past four years.</p> <p>(a) Applicant has provided some evidence that APS has demonstrated improved student learning outcomes in some academic areas (e.g., overall TCAP exceeded State proficiency percentages; schools had a consistent rate of gains on the ICAP; distinguished improvement awards honoring the 8% of public schools with the highest rates of student academic growth; class awarded more than \$7 million in scholarships), but there was not strong improvements in other areas (achievement gaps were only reduced slightly, and graduation rates only increased slightly) over the four-year period. The college enrollment data needs to be clarified to determine what percentage of students who were awarded scholarships actually enrolled in college.</p> <p>(b) Applicant described the reforms used to improve student academic performance (Career Pathways), with evidence of success in the number of students who graduated, but there was not sufficient information provided to understand how the 'Fifth Block' would be considered an ambitious and significant reform; it appeared to be more of a summer school program that is typical of what most schools would provide to students.</p> <p>(c) Applicant describes vaguely the data systems that will be used to link students, teachers and parents to real-time data. The applicant mentions that the district is working to improve this data management system for even better student tracking. More thorough explanation is needed on how these links will work to help make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p> <p>The data for the selection criteria was described within charts, tables, graphs, and raw data. There was a lack of clarity on the data system presently used and how the data is made available to students, educators, and parents. Although a new data management system has been proposed, the district does not presently appear to have a means of sharing the data with students, parents and teachers. A proven track record for addressing closing achievement and increasing graduation rates, especially among the sub-groups, was not evident. Although the applicant has partially addressed how APS has demonstrated a clear track record, there was not enough evidence provided to fully assess if APS has the capacity to be successful in this reform. A high mid-range score was given.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B)(2) APS provides evidence of maintaining a high level of transparency, as demonstrated by its processes outlined in the proposal and its accessibility for public to view on their district website the salaries for the four categories of school-level expenditures listed in this criterion. The application provides extensive evidence that currently through its Vista 2015 Strategic Plan, there is a commitment to a policy of transparent data. Other examples provided for transparency made available to school staff, external organizations and stakeholders include: assessment data and survey data are accessible from the Division of Accountability and Research link on the district website; data walls and data teams are present in schools to inform staff directly about school status and progress, and informational letters to parents, as needed.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated that they have fully addressed all of the criterion in this section and scored the total points.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B)(3) Applicant has provided sufficient evidence that it supports conditions and autonomy under its State laws to implement personalized learning environments. State statutes that support APS's reform to establish a personalized learning environment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State imposed Individual Career and Academic Plans (SB 09-256) - Helps establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align course work and curriculum • Teacher Evaluation Systems (SB 10-191) - improves teacher quality and effectiveness • CAP4K (SB 08-212) - Better defines post secondary and workforce readiness, and modifies assessments to align with standards. It also enforced districts to create multiple curricular pathways to accommodate students' varying interests 		

Applicant has sufficiently described how the laws listed above will support a personalized learning environment as APS implements the argumentative literacy project. All points were awarded.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)

15

11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4) Applicant has described in the proposal the processes of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal.

(a) Applicant has described how the "Personalized Learning Team" was made up of stakeholders, including support from the PTA, Teachers, Administrators, Health Service Administration, school targeted campus administrators, VISTA 2015 Strategic Plan Committee, Emory University, Georgia State University, Promethean World, Morgridge Family Foundation, and Denver Urban Debate Leagues. The Team met on numerous occasions (8-week period) and collectively engaged in writing the RTT-D proposal. (i) The president of the collective bargaining organization endorsed the RTT-D initiative by signing assurance document, but there was no evidence provided that the president shared the RTT-D initiative with teachers or gained their support in the endorsement.

(b) RTT-D Proposal has support, as documented by letters of support from partners and stakeholders and included in the application. Although there are teachers and building principals who are part of the Personalized Learning Team, and the Aurora Education Association president had signed off on support form, there is limited evidence that teachers and building-level principals would commit to the reform in ways that would fully support the proposal. There is no agreement that teachers and principals would attend professional development outside of their contracted days, and implement the Argumentative Literacy strategy into their instruction practices. The application also lacked compelling evidence from student organizations that students at APS would fully engage in this reform program.

Applicant has provided strong evidence from several groups including community, businesses and higher education partners. There was also evidence that parents supported this initiative. Because the lack of evidence for strong support from teachers, principals and students, a mid-range score was awarded.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1) Applicant has described in its high-quality plan a unique way to reach out to learners and implement strategies that is likely going to interest them, as well as personalize their learning environment.

(a)(i) APS has already executed the Individual Career and Academic Plans required by the State. With the RTT-D support, the applicant clearly has identified how ICAP quarterly monitoring between teachers and students will make students see the cross reference between their learning and accomplishing their goals. It was unclear how this monitoring process would work as far the ICAP providing information to the teacher for the purpose of the teacher adjusting her teaching to meet the needs of the student.

(ii) APS adequately addressed in proposal how it plans to work collectively with the ICAPs, the State Common Core Assessments, and the RTT-D grant to Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and help students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals.

(iii) APS's goals for its RTT-D initiative to add Argumentative Literacy instruction into its classroom curriculum is a convincing method, as well as research supported, to allow students to be involved in deep-learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

(iv) The RTT-D initiative of Argumentative Literacy will involve debate teams that include a wide variety of topics. Although the students would address different perspectives during the debate teams, there was a lack of evidence to support that students would have opportunities to have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and

perspectives that would motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(v) The proposal has provided evidence and research that supports that the proposed Argumentative Literacy project will allow students to master critical academic content, and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

(b) (i) Combined with the ICAP, the argumentative Literacy instruction will support a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals, and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready. Applicant also provides evidence of how PLC work will be enhanced to support this criteria.

(ii) It is clear that this project will allow for students to get instruction from various means, and that teachers will be able to share lesson plans and strategies throughout the districts with other teachers who teach the same content and grade level.

(iii) The argumentative instruction depends heavily on a digital learning format, and applicant has written into the proposal how the content is required to be aligned with with college- and career-ready standards.

(iv) Applicant has supplied information related to the feedback received and reviewed from students' ICAPs. The ICAP not only helps students (A) determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, but (B) it personalizes learning recommendations based on the individuals student's current knowledge and skills. At each school level, students select career clusters that align with their interests and their academic performance.

(v) Applicant provides research that supports debate activities for not only high-needs students, but students with disabilities and ELL students.

(C) The applicant has demonstrated how professional development has been planned, and supports to students will be in place to ensure that resources and tools are in place to track and manage learning. Applicant has included plans for PLC work, including learning styles.

Applicant included the components of a high-quality plan as it described and provided evidence for the majority of this selection criterion. Two points were deducted for its lack of providing evidence for the opportunities that students might have for deepening their learning through diverse cultures and contexts, and it was also not clear how the student's goals and feedback that are coming through the ICAP are then translated into adaptive changes of instruction for each student.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included the components of a high-quality plan to demonstrate how its approach to teaching and leading will likely lead to motivating and engaging students that will enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

(a) (i) Applicant has provided in timeline a sufficient amount of time for teachers to be in professional development to learn how to integrate the Argumentative Literacy strategies into their content.

(ii) Applicant has described how PLC work and PLC portal will provide teachers additional resources and tools to share new practices, lesson plans, etc.

(iii) Applicant addresses how its data management system allows for frequently measuring student progress toward meeting its Colorado Academic Standards, and are able to track the ICAP data to assist students, educators and parents with the graduation requirements. Sufficient evidence was provided for using a 'Licensed Educator Evaluation System' to effectively look at teacher strategies and be able to tailor professional development sessions towards weak areas.

(iv) The student data management system is now aligned with each student's ICAP. APS teachers will be evaluated based on the Licensed Educator Evaluator System, which will soon tie the management system and ICAPs. This should be an effective way to ensure that teachers are supporting Personalized Learning Environments with students. The applicant clearly provided details of how the evaluation system operates.

(b) (i) The applicant describes how it uses interactive response systems, which is a tool that is likely to engage student learners, and provide teachers with quick response data.

(ii) The applicant describes the software that it plans to use, and provides information that supports the software will help with differentiated learning opportunities.

(iii) The proposed learner response systems and interactive learning management platform, along with the plan to provide professional development to teachers on the use of such equipment, is likely to improve academic outcomes.

(c) The applicant has provided sufficient evidence that all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have information, updated annually, from the Licensed Educator Evaluation System tool to (i) accurately assess, and take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness. (ii) Applicant has in place from its Vista 2010 strategic planning, practices and training systems that is likely to improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

(d) The applicant has provided evidence that the district has in place a hiring process/staffing strategy (Licensed Personnel Recruitment Strategy) that would draw effective teachers to its district. This is important to assist in improving teacher instructional practices and also ensures that the district is recruiting effective teachers.

The applicant has produced a high-quality plan aligned to the criterion. There are many hours of planned professional development planned. Through this planned summer workshop, school-year PLC work, on-line training, and also the higher-education mentorship/coaching program, the applicant demonstrates how teachers will be given not only individualize support, but will be developing collective capacity with teams to fully implement the reform initiative. There was points deducted because there was a lack of evidence provided that the teachers are committed to attending the two week summer-time professional development, which would jeopardize teachers gaining the necessary skill sets to implement the personal learning environment and also the ability to adapt those environments to meet students' needs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1) The applicant has identified comprehensive practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

(a) The infrastructure of APS appears to operate in compliance with Federal and State statutes. The seven-member board oversees the strategic direction. The APS District has a Grants and Federal Programs Department that manages and supports and is responsible for all aspects of programmatic and fiscal compliance, oversight and management of awards. APS has provided evidence of how the central office is organized, and how it is capable of staying in compliance with grant guidelines.

(b) There has been evidence presented within the proposal that as schools become phased into the grant activities, the district has provided them with sufficient flexibility and autonomy to carry out the RTT-D program - Project LEARN. An example was that applicant stated that schools working on reforms, referred to as Pilot Schools, are exempt from many of the restraints of district policy and as part of the teachers' negotiated agreement. The applicant provided evidence when reporting about its track record that students are allowed to take college-credit classes while still in high school.

(c-d) Applicant has described how the grading system is designed in the district. The applicant will use a combination of the APS Data Management System, the ICAP tracking system, and through Career Pathways, ways in which students can demonstrate mastery at their own pace. The applicant's State's interim assessments are also given three times throughout the year to provide benchmarks.

(e) Applicant proposes to continue using the RTI model, professional learning opportunities to learn new instructional strategies along with project coaching, which are feasible resources accessible to all students and teachers.

The applicant has presented in its application evidence of its policies, practices and rules for all of the components included in a high-quality plan.

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

A high-quality plan was designed within the application that supports personalized learning.

(a) With the implementation of the online portal and student management system, along with the intensive training for educators, all participating students, parents, educators and stakeholders could support the implementation of the LEARN

project.

(b) The proposal provides the training topics and timelines that would support technical assistance for participating students, parents, educators and stakeholders. The applicant has stated that parents will be able to access the APS Technician and Application Specialist every school day from 6:30 am until 5:00 pm.

(c) An open-data format (Infinite Campus) is supported by use of a password-protected access on the online portal system.

(d) An interoperable data system is supported by use of the APS Data Management System.

The criterion was thoroughly addressed in the proposal with descriptions of the components of a high-quality plan.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(1) Applicant has designed a high-quality plan to determine improvements needed to be made for Project LEARN. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, informal feedback, monthly progress reports, and formal quarterly reports, the project staff, assisted by the University contracted staff, has a clear approach to how they will make improvements as the grant is implemented and continues throughout the grant period. It was unclear of how the chart illustration describing the feedback loop was aligned to the improvement process goals, and there was no narrative explaining the elements listed in the flow chart.</p> <p>Applicant has provided a narrative describing the components of a high-quality plan for continuous improvement, but more description of the feedback loop illustration is needed to comprehensively understand the entire process. Thirteen points were awarded, which puts the score in the high-range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant has provided within the proposal, a transitioned into a partnership focused model that represents the plan that APS will follow in its communication and engagement about the Project LEARN. The project has addressed how the Personalized Learning Team will be in charge of this communication to internal and external stakeholders. Examples for ongoing communication and engagement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have been involved in project planning and will continue to be involved throughout all phases of project implementation. • Regular updates are provided to parents and the school community via newsletters sent home with students, inviting parents to contact the Title I parent representative to provide specific input. • Timely publication and dissemination of the results of student annual progress to parents, teachers, principals and the school community. • An explanation of how the parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement, including parent input/consultation in the development or revision of the required school improvement plan, and a listing of strategies to promote more effective parent involvement at the school. • Convening an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain the program requirements; and the right of the parents to be involved. • Offering a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement. • Involving parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy, and the joint development of the school-wide program plans. 		

Applicant has presented a high-quality plan and has designed the plan to meet all of the criterion. All points were awarded.

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

(E)(3) (a) Applicant has provided rationale for selecting its measures that they plan to use in Project LEARN.

- Explore - Pre-ACT and PLAN assessment aligned to college entrance requirements and has benchmarks already established. Identifies students who are on track with college readiness skills.
- TCAP - State's required assessment aligned with Common Core. Identifying increase in students moving to proficient level of academic performance.
- FASFA - the number of applications completed and submitted
- Student Climate Survey & Attendance Rates - measures students' social, emotional, and academic needs and their satisfaction with in-school experiences.
- ACT - Measures students' ability to complete college-level work.

(b) Applicant has included the measures that it plans to use, but none of those listed would provide timely feedback, nor would they be considered formative.

(c) The applicant will use the Personalized Learning Team to review and measure its progress towards meeting goals and objectives. The Team will be responsible to gauge and make changes as needed throughout the grant cycle.

The measures used will provide data to help with determining adjustments for later years of the grant. The Targets are ambitious (e.g. TCAP for all students and all sub-groups of students will increase 20% over the life of the grant; ACT averages increased substantially), but the initiative proposed should allow for APS to achieve these targets. This criterion scored in the mid-range.

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

(E)(4) The applicant has included a high-quality plan to evaluate the RTT-D funded activities. The proposal has outlined all of the planned activities using all of the components of a high-quality plan, and described clearly how each will be evaluated to determine effectiveness. This criterion scored all of the points.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(1) (a-b) The applicant has identified all funds that will support Project LEARN, and provided a narrative description that justifies the expenditures. The applicant's budget is extremely high due to subcontracting with Georgia State University (indirect cost and fringe benefit percentage), especially in the personnel category. The applicant proposes five full-time Georgia State staff to work as full-time curriculum director/curriculum specialists. There are numerous other full-time and part-time job titles listed within the budget narrative, but there is not sufficient evidence (i.e. job descriptions) to explain what they actually will do in the grant or how they will communicate and provide curriculum services to APS staff.

(c) The applicant provides a clear description of the purchases, and identifies the one-time purchases versus the continuing expenses. The purchases are reasonable to carry out the activities proposed in the grant.

This selection criteria scored at the low end of the high-range.

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

(F) (2) The applicant has justified how much of the funding to continue the reform will not be needed by the end of the grant (Teacher leader tasks will be fully incorporated; PLC portal will be familiar and accessible to teachers; District Project Staff - technology coach, technician and application specialists will no longer be needed) but, It is unclear how if a significant portion of the budget is devoted to personnel that do not reside in the district (Georgia State University professors and graduate students), will APS be able to continue building district capacity beyond the life of the grant. Because the applicant doesn't provide a lot of explanation with how a post-grant budget will be determined and potential sources of funding, the reviewer deducted points and awarded a high-medium range score for this criteria.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) Applicant has provided a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership to support Project REACH. As demonstrated in the detailed Letter of Support included in the Appendix beginning on page 15, the Denver Urban Debate League will serve as a sustainable project partner for the LEARN initiative. Denver Urban Debate League (DUDL) is committed to improving urban education in nearby Denver by helping students learn and achieve through Debate. It is the mission of The Denver Urban Debate League to provide opportunities for competitive debate to every student in the Denver area. DUDL emphasizes education over competition, using debate as a tool to build valuable academic and life skills that will ensure Denver's students future college and career success. The DUDL works with our community to promote inclusiveness, education equity, and active citizenship. As an active partner with APS, the Denver Urban Debate League will implement extra-curricular competitive debate programming in APS middle and high schools, based on a research-based and field-tested model of a public-private partnership between an urban school system and an external group of business, education and civic leaders.

(2) Applicant has Identified population-level desired results for: free and reduced lunches; ELL; Black; Hispanic; Black Males; Hispanic Males; Males overall). A clearly written table producing the type of result (educational or family and community supports) and the desired results were provided (i.e. "Increase ACT Composite scores by 3 points over the life of the grant").

(3) The applicant has been thorough in describing how the partnership would track indicators that measure results, use the data to target its resources, develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students, improve over time.

(4) The applicant has evidence that there is a commitment to integrate education and other services for participating students. The applicant provides sufficient details of how it will integrate educational, social-emotional, and behavioral services within the debate programming.

(5) The applicant has described a reasonable plan to become self sufficient after year five of the grant period. Through this "best practice" approach described by applicant, DUDL will help APS to build an Urban Debate League that is locally sustainable, with highly rigorous and research-tested programming, structured around a public-private partnership between the urban public school system and a local non-profit organization dedicated specifically to this mission and made up of civic leadership from the legal, business, academic, and the non-profit sectors.

(6) The applicant has provided tables that have clearly Identified its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students. The applicant has provided evidence of how the Transition Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) is an important indicator for how a district serves the students entrusted in its care. Project REACH has described how its plan to address specific performance insufficiencies. An example would be: "While APS does not have 100% proficiency on the reading, writing, mathematics, and science assessments for all students, the differences between Blacks and Whites, Hispanics and Whites, and both ELL and FRL and whites are profound."

The applicant has provided a strong proposal and demonstrated how it proposes to integrate public or private resources in a partnership to implement and carryout a successful reform for its middle and high schools in its district.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it has built on the core educational assurance areas to create their Project LEARN reform initiative that they are proposing in the RTT-D grant.		

Total	210	182
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0238CO-3 for Adams-Arapahoe 28J

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant, APS, describes a high quality plan to build on the four core educational assurance areas with the vision to focus on "L.E.A.R.N." approach and how it will use the funds to implement and develop activities to be successful is by establishing projects and activities to reach its goals. The applicant provides evidence to demonstrate activities to support the vision and reach its goals.

Through the efforts of LEARN, APS students will be equipped with the technical skills to perform and the critical skills required in order to be sought after in the workforce.

Through the efforts of LEARN, APS students, regardless of the student's pathways, course of study, rigorous curriculum is connected to focused, hands on, relevant learning and job readiness skills, leading to graduating classes of students prepared to compete in secondary education and training and the workplace

Through the efforts of LEARN, students in APS will gain authentic learning experiences, higher order thinking, and student led learning in the core classroom that will support them as they prepare for college.

Through the efforts of LEARN, students in APS will have the necessary technological, academic, and life skills as they graduate from high school and enter today's global economy.

Through the efforts of LEARN, educators in APS will have the necessary skills to provide a personalized learning environment that will meet each student's individual need.

Through the efforts of LEARN, parents and stakeholders will have a vital role to ensure all students have the necessary skills to become lifelong citizens.

Through the efforts of LEARN, the community will play a vital role to ensure the school has the necessary support to enable accelerated results for student achievement.

APS's initiative is in the process of drafting a Request for Proposal for a data system that will consolidate all other data systems that will be utilized district wide. With this system the district will be able to monitor and analyze all data streams (e.g. attendance, behavior, interim assessments, state exams, extra curricular activities participation, parent volunteering).

APS has a Unified Improvement Plan that enables continuously monitoring and tracking performance growth of subgroups

to detect regression in student achievement.

(b)The applicant addresses the goal of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equality through the Argumentative Approach. Through this approach, students are facilitators. The lessons are debate oriented. Students learn to think critically using higher order thinking skills. With the rationale provided, the approach is sound.

(c) The applicant's classroom will focus on conducting research to develop and strengthen arguments, rich with discourse (e.g. dialog and debate), and digital access (e.g. internet, social network (figment.com or Debate, org)).

Based on the evidence provided the plan supports the vision that aligns with the four core assurance areas resulting in a high score of 10.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant has provided a description of the process that was used to select schools to participate. The applicant used a process entitled Tier 1, 2, and 3. Their schools were selected by conducting a needs assessment. All selected campuses have the necessary internal structures in place to support the initiative. Each year additional schools will be added throughout the grant period. Through this process, the applicant provided the rationale for the first round of schools to participate.

(b) The applicant provided a detailed chart listing all of the schools that will participate in grant activities.

(c) The applicant provided the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators. The chart was well designed.

Additional schools will be added throughout the first three years of the four year grant. They have demonstrated the ability to use the three tier process.

Based on the selection process, the selected schools have the necessary internal structures in place, including regularly occurring embedded professional development opportunities and strong administrative support for the initiative to implement personalized learning, resulting in high range score of 10.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and will help the applicant reach its outcome. A clearly defined plan is outlined to demonstrate how the reform proposal will be implemented and has potential to improve outcomes for all students. Through the rigorous instructional model of LEARN, the guiding principles will assist in making students successful (e.g. Critical Listening, Evidence and Explanation, Assigned Advocacy, Critical Reading, Note Taking and Critical Writing). To scale up the applicant has outlined goals and timelines (e.g. the applicant will be adding schools each year of the grant ensuring that all students are participating in LEARN classrooms; meanwhile, Argumentative Literacy will be a regular component of the instructional practices for all students by year 3 which will be personalizing the learning experience through student-led research and investigations, authentic application of content knowledge, and active learning at the large group, small group, and individual levels). The plan has key goals, various activities, a rationale for the activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing the activities. The activities were not clearly defined. Deliverables will be done with scaling up with middle and high school. The applicant does not emphasize scaling up in the elementary school. It is unclear how they will address elementary students.

Overall based on the components of a high quality plan, the applicant presented a plan that supports for the initiative for personalized learning to implement their proposal, however, there was a lack of details clearly defining the activities, resulting in middle range score of 7.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant outlines how the vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity. The applicant bases its comparison of achievable and ambitious goals to the State Goals that are equal to or exceed the Colorado Department of Education Targets. The applicant provides evidence to increase test scores over 5 years at a projected growth rate of 3% - 5% for reading, math, and writing. The annual goal is to increase test scores overall 10%. Based on the data trend for the past two years the goals are achievable and ambitious because they meet or exceed the State ESEA targets. The performance on summative assessments coupled with individualized instruction will aid administrators and educators as they prepare and identify students for either enrichment or remediation. As administrators and educators become more aware of specific areas in which each student needs support, students will have multiple opportunities and pathways to demonstrate mastery resulting in improved performance in all areas on summative assessments through the Individualized Learning Plan as indicated in the vision for the reform; thus attaining predicted increases (goals).</p> <p>(b) The applicant proposes to decrease the achievement gap among the various subgroups by a projected 5% decrease each year. Based on the data trend for the past two years, the goals are achievable and ambitious.</p> <p>(c) The applicant proposes an increase in graduation rates by a projected 4% increase each year. Based on the data trend for the past two years, the goals are achievable and ambitious.</p> <p>(d) The applicant proposes an increase in college enrollment by a projected 4% - 5% increase each year. Based on the data trend for the past two years, the goals are achievable and ambitious.</p> <p>As evidenced in a chart, goals of increase are shown in comparison of baseline data presented.</p> <p>(e) The applicant proposes a 10% increase over the period of the grant data for postsecondary degree attainment. Based on the data trend for the past two years, the goals are achievable and ambitious.</p> <p>Based on the information provided to improve student learning and performance, the applicant has demonstrated it plans to achieve ambitious and achievable goals which are reasonable, resulting in a score of 10.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The extent to which the applicant improves student learning outcomes is provided through evidence that demonstrates improved proficiency scores on the State assessment (TCAP) for 2012 which was an overall gain of 1.3% as compared to the State +.2%. The applicant details information to demonstrate its efforts to advance student learning and achievement within the last four years in reading, math, and writing. The reported outcomes demonstrate some reasonable success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement among subgroups participating in the reform initiative. There is a consistent rate of gain on ICAP, demonstrating a track record in decreasing the achievement gap. Graduation rates for APS students are steadily increasing (e.g. 2010, 47.5% graduated within a four year period; by 2012; 53.6% which was an overall 6.1% increase). The applicant provides evidence that the Class of 2012 graduated with more than 7 million dollars in scholarships. While positive, this does not demonstrate that college enrollment has increased over the past four years.</p> <p>(b) The applicant has implemented a variety of reforms targeted at the lowest performing schools (e.g Fifth Block of Instruction). The applicant demonstrated how to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its low-performing schools by implementing programs for students who have shown academic growth during the year (e.g. Fifth Block of Instruction or Initiative, Career Pathways) . By providing the students with 23 days of instruction focused on math and literacy, Fifth Period Block has demonstrated a solid impact on student achievement. All students who attended the Fifth Period Block graduated. Another important entity for improving student academic outcomes in lowest achieving schools is the Career Pathways.</p> <p>(c) The applicant outlines practices used to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services (e.g. numerous tracking systems, Infinite Campus, parent portals, Acuity System, Request for Proposal, Schoology).</p> <p>Weaknesses: The applicant did not provide the past four years of data about college enrollment.</p> <p>Based on the evidence provided, the applicant demonstrated a clear track record of success of support for the initiative for personalized learning to</p>		

implement their proposal; however, the applicant did not provide the past years of data about college enrollment, resulting in a score of 10.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly supports a high level of transparency by providing evidence to show how the following information is made available:

- (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff in the district's budget book, which is published at least once annually on the school web page.
- (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff which are available on the school's budget page contained within the district's budget book.
- (c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers, which is published only on the school's budget page contained with the district's budget book.
- (d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level, which are published on the school's budget page contained with the district's budget book.

This is one of the many ways in which the applicant has demonstrated a high level of transparency by making information public. Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has made salaries available for public view resulting in a score of 5.

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

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10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments because of the support from the State (e.g. Teacher evaluation system, Individual Career and Academic Plans, and strategies designed to improve student attainment of proficiency levels on high stakes testing such as Argumentative Literacy are all driven by legislative regulations). Successful conditions of the state's reform agenda encompasses implementation of rigorous college and career-ready standards in response to the need to aim higher in expectations for student learning; expanding the state's data system to develop summative assessments in English, language arts, and mathematics to align with Common Core State Standards. The General Assembly enacted Governor Ritter's Colorado Achievement Plan 4 Kids (CAP4K, SB8-212). CAP4K required the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to establish definitions of school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness (e.g. the definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness was adopted in 2009 which provides a clear standard of expectation for high school completion focused on preparing students to enter postsecondary and workforce situations without a need for remediation or basic instruction). Senate Bill 10-191 focused on the belief that every child in every community deserves excellent classroom teacher and building leaders who are supported in their professional growth. SB0925, the State Board of Education required rules to establish standards for Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP). The State's reform agenda has impacted conditions at the district level by ensuring that all students must have a highly effective teacher (e.g. to support school districts in implementing new evaluation requirements, CDE is developing a State Model Evaluation System as an option for districts to use for teacher and principal evaluations).

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments resulting in a score of 10.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)

15

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides evidence of the stakeholders' development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on the engagement and feedback. APS completed a needs assessment. Included in this process was the formation of a Personalized Learning Team which included district and campus leadership as well as community stakeholders. After the needs assessment, various teams were formed. The applicant presents evidence of groups that are represented on the Personalized Learning Team (e.g. APS District Parent Teacher Association, APS District Teachers, APS District Administrators, APS District Student Health Services Administration, Administrator from each targeted campus, VISTA 2015 Strategic Plan Committee, Emory University, Georgia State University). There was evidence of student support. There was no clear evidence of teacher support.

(b) The applicant provides several letters of support from such key stakeholders such as University of Denver Storm College of Law, Aurora Education Association, Carrie Morgridge Family Foundation, United States Senator, Michael

Bennett, Emory University, Georgia State University, the National Association of Urban League.

Weaknesses. There was no evidence in reference to collective bargaining, and it was not clear about teachers' participation.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant had sufficient documentation for stakeholder engagement and support, but omitted important details regarding teacher participation and support, resulting in a score of 10.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant provides a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment with the support of parents and educators. The applicant includes several clear strategies to help students understand the connection between what they are learning will impact their future goals. Through the ICAP process, students will understand the direct link between their course selection and their postsecondary ambitions. The proposal also includes Argumentative Literacy that will help students identify personal goals for college and career readiness and structure their learning plans in order to meet their personal goals. The applicant provides evidence by clearly defined strategies that allow students to understand that what they are learning is the key to their success in accomplishing their goals; identification and pursuit of learning and development goals linked to college and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The LEARN model is designed to help students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals. The model also allows the ability for students to be involved in deep learning experiences in the areas of academic interest; and mastering of critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

(b) The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment with the support of parents and educators. Each student grades 6-12 will create and maintain a personalized ICAP detailing unique learning goals in various time-frames. Through the online secure portal, students and parents will be able to access their ICAP to monitor progress. The ICAP will be reviewed quarterly and annually. The applicant provided evidence to incorporate Professional Learning Communities. Opportunities to master the skills and knowledge needed to compete in 21st century jobs, include debates, hands-on field experience and community outreach projects related to coursework and career studies.

(c) The applicant outlines a strong plan for mechanisms to be in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. (e.g. debate training for teachers, providing school based coaching assistance for teachers) The applicant provides evidence of partnerships with all stakeholders (students, parents, staff, universities, businesses, community organizations, and governmental agencies). The applicant provides evidence for a Personalized Learning Team to provide training and support to students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. The Individual Career and Academic Plan allows educators, parents, counselors, and administrators to guide students as they implement each action step.

Weaknesses: It is not clear how the ICAP will provide needed feedback for teachers and students to personalize their learning. The applicant does not expand on how the model will expose students to different cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant outlines a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment that will provide support for students to graduate college and career ready, resulting in a score of 17.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This is evidenced by participating educators engaging in on-going training, and in professional learning communities, that support their individual and collective capacity to improve their teaching skills and support the effective implementation

of personalized learning environments. Extensive training in class coaching and lesson plan development will be done in the summer. Throughout the learning process a variety of training will take place; however, there is no evidence of extensive training. The applicant is relying heavily on teachers, and there is no evidence that teachers have agreed to participate in these summer trainings. The chart is detailed in providing the different trainings and timelines.

b) The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment for all participating educators to have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant provides evidence to incorporate extensive training throughout the summer. Training sessions will include lesson plan development, technology, how to assess data, and personalize differentiation.

(c) The applicant outlines a plan for all participating school leaders and school leadership teams to have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources, including both instructional content and assessment tools, which are aligned with CAS, prepare students for college and the workforce after high school. Teachers will use online software that aggregates quality digital resources to support a curriculum on argumentative literacy. Through this software, teachers and students can gain access to media and texts representing divergent viewpoints on content-specific topics.

(d) The applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas by revamping the evaluation process. The evaluation process for teachers and principals is an ongoing model that provides feedback to inform training and support needs. The applicant provided evidence on updating annually, the Licensed Educator Evaluation system tools that allows administrators and school leadership teams to accurately assess their effectiveness, and take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness.

There was sufficient evidence to support teaching and leading resulting in a score 19. One point was removed because there does not appear to be a plan for guaranteeing teacher participation in training activities.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant demonstrates it has a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student the support and resources needed. The LEA central office provides support and services to all participating schools. APS Board of Education follows a policy governance model. With the Board's support, the district Leadership Team determines the strategic direction of the district. Board members are elected at large. There is a 10 member Leadership Team which consists of the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Personnel Officer, Chief Accountability and Research Officer, Chief Communication Officer, Chief Equity an Engagement Officer, and Legal Counsel. The applicant provided the district organization chart which demonstrates its organizational structure to support services to students.

(b)The applicant provides evidence that demonstrates school leadership teams in participating schools have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets to facilitate personalized learning. Pilot schools have increased control of budget, design of instruction, daily, and yearly schedules, and calendars, and staffing decisions. In return for autonomy and control over their resources, Pilot Schools are expected to demonstrate significant increases in student achievement within three years.

(c) The applicant provides evidence to support the fact that standards based grading give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The APS Standards grading system gives information about what students know compared to the standards and assesses the more subjective factors like participation and effort. The APS Data Management System provides teachers and administrators at a glance documentation of success levels for individual students. The system also allows students to "test out" of coursework in order to pursue an accelerated pace of study. Through Career Pathways, teachers and administrators can recommend students for accelerated courses as well as parents.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways is demonstrated through Interim Assessments given three times a year in every subject area, grades 3 - 10. Through Argumentative Literacy students will demonstrate mastery of content and skills in formats previously inaccessible (e.g. Public speaking, persuasive essay writing).

(e) Learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and

English learners is accomplished through use of the RTI model and instructional practices for teachers, supported by professional learning and the district coaching model. Also, the applicant provided several research studies involving students with disabilities and ELL students. The research indicated that Argumentative Literacy instructional strategies such as inquiry based learning, logical reasoning in the context of problem solving correlates with meta-linguistic ability development.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant presented a high quality plan to support project implementation, resulting in a score 15.

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

(a) Ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the proposal is presented in the narrative. Students in grades 6-12 will focus on debate instruction. To ensure that all students have access to the learning process, all educators grades 6-12 will take part in training opportunities and ongoing PLC's to provide the continuous support necessary to promote the implementation of Argumentative Literacy. Parents will be able to support their child's academic progress through the online component of ICAP data management system. Evening hours for families to use the media center will be provided which will create new opportunities to access the Internet and track student performance. APS's families will take part in the Comcast Internet Essentials Program which provides low income families home Internet service at a reduce price.

(b) The applicant ensures that students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, by providing ongoing support as the applicant implements Argumentative Literacy. For example, there will be large group sessions, small group sessions, and individualized training for educators to work collaboratively with a focus on each teacher's level of technical comfort. There will be an APS Technician and Application Specialist during the school hours. The applicant presents a chart outlining training and timelines.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems is demonstrated by the applicant through use of Infinite Campus which allows parents and students to export their information in an open data format, and to use the data in other electronic systems (e.g. electronic tutors or tech enabled tools). Students' records can be integrated across the system, compiling data into each child's ICAP from various systems (e.g. Acuity, Enrich, PALS, Schoology, Naviance).

(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems is demonstrated by the applicant through use of the APS Data Management System. All systems can be connected directly at APS Data Management System.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has a high quality plan for the project's implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system with the support and resources they need for the reform initiative resulting in a score of 10.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a strong plan for a rigorous continuous improvement process. The plan is rigorous because it is designed to provide for the ongoing gathering of both quantitative and qualitative performance feedback, measuring student and education benchmarks. The plan presented lays a foundation for continuous improvement strategies that support the identification of measures of the fidelity of implementation and student outcomes. This will be done through the planning and decision making process, managing of issues and risks, learning team, meeting facilitation, and ensuring accountability. This plan provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant (e.g. project director will teleconference with campus principals on a monthly basis to discuss project progress and set aside a formal opportunity to confirm the receipt of monthly data). The plan also addresses how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top (e.g. measuring benchmarks, monthly progress reports, formal quarterly reports, regularly scheduled quarterly meetings). The RTT-D grant will have a designated webpage on the District website to inform all stakeholders on the goal and objective milestones, celebrations and outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative performance feedback measuring student and educator benchmarks will be provided. The Personalized Learning Team will review quarterly progress reports, compiled by the Evaluation Team to provide suggestions for refining, strengthening and improving the project approach as appropriate to ensure that stated goals, objectives and performance measures are attained. Stakeholders will be informed through regularl

quarterly Personalized Learning Team meetings, email, phone conversations, fax alerts, and regularly scheduled phone conferences. Other means of communicating include quarterly newsletters which will contain information about investments, professional development, technology and staff.

Weaknesses: The goals are unclear, and there is inconsistency about who will be responsible for each goal.

Based on the evidence provided the applicant presents a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant; however, the goals are unclear and there is inconsistency about who will be responsible for each goal, resulting in a score of 12.

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

The applicant describes a strong system of communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Communication will be facilitated through community workforce teams, Pathway Advisory Committees, C-Level Consortiums, Town Hall meetings, Post-secondary committees, school level parent groups, student clubs and leadership teams, Board of Education, and Aurora Education Association meetings, and all forms of social media via internet communications. Traditional and non-traditional activities will allow districts to maintain as well as improve communication with parents and guardians. The Personalized Learning Team is charged with continual communications and status reports to administrators, BOE, community partners and internal staff and schools. Stakeholders will be informed through regular teleconference, meetings, email, telephone conversations, quarterly in person meetings, and fax alerts. The Personalized Learning Team members will receive bi-weekly updates via email. Monthly monitoring of project milestones will occur through the submission of standardized reporting templates, which will be distributed to all participating campuses each quarter.

APS has put policies in place to support and ensure engagement with parents and other stakeholders. Parents have been involved in the project planning and this will continue throughout all the phases of project implementation, offering a flexible number of meetings such as meetings in the morning or evening, and the applicant may provide RTT-D funds for transportation, child care, or home visits, and having an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, which will inform them of their school's participation and explain the program requirements and the right of the parents to be involved).

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant presents a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, resulting in a score of 5.

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

The applicant uses the ACT Explore Assessment for students in grade 8 and 9 to assess college and career readiness. The Transition Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) is the current state assessment for reading, writing, mathematics and science; however, in addition to the end of year summative assessments, the state of Colorado will be using the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The rationale for using this assessment is that it will provide diagnostic and interim assessments which will provide more timely feedback to teachers and to parents. This test will have a component designed to measure critical thinking and listening skills. As provided in the proposal, the students' performance and goals are based on the TCAP. The applicant has performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The targets for each year will be utilized for planning and performance management for the RTTT reform efforts from each level of implementation - district to school to classroom. Additionally, each measure is also set and identified by each subgroup of students (race/ethnicity, poverty, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners). Information provided by this measure are critical to making every student outcome visible and holding schools accountable for those outcomes. The information is actionable at the school level meaning that school leaders, teachers and staff can use the information to make changes that will have demonstrated impact on the applicant's progress in implementing its reform proposal. Therefore, the performance measures are ambitious and achievable.

Weaknesses: The assessments used are a one time year assessment which will not allow for timely and immediate feedback. There are no indicators using information from formative or interim assessments.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant's performance measures are ambitious and yet achievable; however, the assessments being used do not allow for timely and immediate feedback, resulting in a score of 3.

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

The applicant presents a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded

activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology. The plans include key goals, activities, and the rationale for those activities. The plan includes the parties who are responsible for carrying out the duties and responsibilities. The applicant has presented an implementation schedule. There will be an evaluation team that will conduct an initial assessment of the training program, a quantitative, and a qualitative assessment of the program's implementation and a school-wide climate survey. The surveys will include information regarding rating participants experiences with professional learning training, assessing qualitative fidelity of LEARN Program Implementation, and rating on-going participant satisfaction with LEARN Program. The process for gathering this information will provide a confidential means for all teachers and students to provide their reactions and suggestions for program improvements.

The evaluation plan includes a two part series for the LEARN program (the school-wide classroom intervention and the after-school debate programming). Students involved in the afterschool debate program benefit both during the day and after school hours. APS will use a quasi- experimental design to compile and analyze achievement data using School View and will obtain data to compare schools in the Denver Public School District by matching demographics and achievement levels. This evaluation will allow APS to roll out interventions and make additional comparisons between the time trends of student outcomes in the years before and after the interventions are implemented. A second analysis will estimate any additional benefits to after-school participants using a propensity score match design. A final analysis will estimate the benefits of the LEARN program for producing effective teachers. The base percentage of effective teachers (e.g. producing average annual student growth achievement scores of at least one year) will be determined from the year prior to the implementation of the LEARN program. This data will be analyzed using multiple regression models. After the data is analyzed, it will be reported. The Georgia State University Research Team will report the findings on each of the research goals to the APS District Office, in years 2 through 4 of the study.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the top District funded activities, resulting in a score of 5.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Costs associated with the development and implementation of the initiative is evident. All budget items are based on specific project needs to create Personalized Learning Environments. The applicant demonstrates that funds will be budgeted to provide the required services to eligible schools. For example, costs for a project director to oversee the program are requested; costs to provide technology throughout the project are requested; and costs for instructional coaches to support teachers' instructional development are requested. Total direct costs for Personnel over the grant period is an estimated \$4.1 million which will include a subcontracted Principal Investigator, research coordinator, study faculty, video production coordinator, curricular development coordinator, area curriculum specialists and six doctoral students. After the program, several jobs will be eliminated. The negotiated fringe benefits rate for Georgia State University is 29.9% for faculty and staff. The amount in personnel is a concern. There is no rationale provided to support the 29.9% fringe rate for Georgia State University's faculty and staff. The applicant does provide evidence for one-time investments. The applicant has an indirect cost rate approved by its State Educational Agency.</p> <p>Weaknesses: There is not a rationale provided to substantiate the necessity for the high fringe rate of 29.9% for Georgia State University's faculty and staff. Without a justification, the fringe rate appears excessive.</p> <p>Based on the evidence provided the applicant has provided major costs presented for all major line items; however, there is not a rationale provided to substantiate the necessary reason for the high fringe rate of 29.9% for Georgia State University's faculty and staff, resulting in a score of 7.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has provided evidence of a high quality plan for sustaining the goals of the RTT-D initiative beyond the initial four year period. First, APS will continue to contribute resources (e.g. maintaining technologies, space, supplies, etc) beyond the grant funded project period. The Personalized Learning Team will identify potential state, local and federal funding sources and community support (e.g. in-kind donations, funds, supplies and materials, volunteers, etc.) The Personalized Learning Team will prepare a timeline and a list of action items for approaching each possible source of funding which will be reviewed and updated every six months. The Evaluation Team will document all accomplishments of</p>		

all formative and summative activities throughout the grant period. Information about LEARN will be disseminated through the APS community to obtain additional community support. The Personalized Learning Team will use the evaluation framework by Alexander's Conceptual Model of Sustainability in Community Health Partnerships (outcomes-based advocacy, vision-focus balance, systems orientation, infrastructure development, and community linkages).

As outlined in the budget, the applicant will support long-term sustainability of all project activities and the resulting positive impacts (e.g. Ongoing professional development for educators and administrators, professional learning communities, APS LEARN Instructional Coaches, Argumentative Literacy Refresher, and Argumentative Literacy integrated into the New Teacher Trainings). These activities in place will create highly trained educators and administrators to continue the project outcomes and goals beyond the initial funding of the grant period after the duration of the grant.

After the grant period expenses for Tournament Transportation, Teach Coach Stipends, Team Coach Benefits will be funded from the Morgridge Family foundation and food expenses will be funded through USDA funding sources or private sources. Training staffing at the end of the grant period will be provided by individual campuses. Georgia State University will be sub-contracted after the initial four-year period.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant, resulting in a score of 10.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

As evidence, the applicant has partnered with Denver Debate Urban League which will provide opportunities for competitive debates to every student in the Denver area. Students in grades 6-12 will create and maintain a personalized ICAP detailing unique goals in various time-frames and through the online secure portal. Students and parents will be able to access their ICAP to monitor progress. APS conducts ongoing student assessment, integrating student records across systems, compiling data into each child's ICAP from systems such as Acuity, Enrich, Pals, Schoology, Naviance. All students participating in the after school debate activities will be tracked as a unique subgroup so that their progress in all benchmark areas can be compared to students not receiving debate-focused instruction. The Denver Debate Urban League will be represented on the Personalized Learning Team throughout the grant period and the successes and weaknesses of the partnership will be reported quarterly. The applicant has presented a plan that tracks the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level for the participating students by providing a chart that contains the Population Group, Type of Result, and the Desired Results. The applicant has presented a chart that provides data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty, family instability, or other child welfare issues by providing a chart that indicates the subgroup's performance on assessments and their proportions of the total population in the school. The applicant has developed a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities in the LEA over time. By using assessments, desired improvements are likely to result over a period of time.

As evidence, by integrating the Argumentative Model with all participating students, the debate approach will enhance all student social and emotional behaviors. The Denver Debate Urban League provides debate training for teachers at debate workshops, sponsors debate tournaments, and provides an argument and research kit including core files and research guides on the debate topic. These are examples of services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs for participating students.

As evidence, the TCAP is the indicator to determine academic performance between the subgroups. The applicant is concerned about the achievement among ELL and students with free-and-reduced-price lunch on state assessments.

As evidence, the LEARN approach will be implemented in a Tier Schedule, and the after school debate team will also implemented on the Tier Schedule. This process will spread the impact of LEARN across APS in the four year timeframe, and Denver Urban Debate League will continue to support the expansion of the extra curricular debate program in years to come, adding additional teams as interest and commitment grows at each campus.

As evidence, the Denver Urban Debate League will use the approach that reflects "best practices" which will include a five year building process (e.g. Y1 Founding, Y2 Forming, Y3 Launching, Y4 Establishing, Y5 Transitioning)

As evidence, engaging parents and families will continue through the ICAP. The decision making process and infrastructure will continue to go through the Personalized Learning Teams which will provide quarterly evaluation reports for

administrators, teachers, parents, and representatives for students to assess qualitative and quantitative data and identify performance gaps and benchmarks and create action steps to remediate.

As evidence, the goals presented are realistic as APS examines trend data, which show fluctuation across time. APS anticipates a modest increase in academic achievement across the student subgroups included in the charts.

Based on the evidence, the applicant had demonstrated how it proposes to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students, resulting in a score of 10.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant met Absolute Priority 1.

The applicant provided evidence to address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments to significantly improve learning and teaching through personalizing education. APS has designed a model that builds upon the Common Core Standards that features a strong focus on debate, argumentation, justification and research. Through this model, a learner response system technology and an interactive learning management platform is designed to assist in the collection and use of data to inform instruction. Classroom sets of student devices will provide detailed insight into student performance over time, allowing educators to develop personalized learning plans tailored to individual learning needs (ICAP), accelerating learning for all students by facilitating ongoing personalized learning environments. To ensure such a learning environment, APS has support from various stakeholders throughout the state of Colorado. The learning environment must recruit and maintain highly effective teachers and administrators for turning around lowest achieving schools. The schools have been identified and evaluation systems are in place for the reform initiative.

The applicant has the necessary tools in place to carry out this initiative. The model is research based. The applicant has designed a plan for the students to graduate college and career ready.

Total	210	185
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