



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0075NM-1 for Albuquerque Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides a compelling overview of the district, the state's largest, and how it is impacted by multiple community risk factors that promote low academic achievement, especially in underperforming schools. In its Strategic Academic Plan, the district articulates clear goals to raise overall student achievement, close achievement gaps, raise the graduation rate, and improve failing schools and strengthen school communities. Applicant's proposal seeks to create an effective-research-based personalized learning initiative to strategically implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and prepare for content and assessments delivered online through interactive, instructional technologies. Applicant makes a strong case for selecting the district's middle schools as the focus of their proposal, which is focused around four strategies: equip, explore; engage, and excel. These strategies, as defined in the application, will include activities and supports for school leaders and teachers, increased use of modern instructional technologies, ongoing site-based professional learning, and continuous improvement cycles to ensure that the district's middle schools transition seamlessly into robust personalized learning environments. The proposal does not explicitly address how this reform vision, which is reasonably comprehensive and coherent, builds on its work in the core educational assurance areas, but it does articulate a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student supports. The narrative is thin on describing what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments in the (A)(1) narrative, but this is fleshed out throughout the application. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant describes how implementation in grades 6-8 will occur in two tracks: personalized learning schools (23 middle schools) and personalized learning 1to1 Magnets (four middle schools with F grades overall and in the lowest-performing quartile, based on the state's school grading system, chronically low student performance, and high-need student population). The process is well-defined, and the chart of schools and participating students is complete. Given the district's coupling of research on best practices for instructional technology implementation with over 35 years of research review by the Association for Middle Level Education, the applicant's approach is likely to lead to high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of the project.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides a fairly well-developed logic model showing project inputs, strategies, activities and objectives, and outcomes (short- and long-term) that will help the applicant meet its outcome goals. The creation of an Office of Innovation focused on building capacity is a strength meeting an area of identified need for the district. The logic model could more clearly define the specific responsible parties who will be responsible for implementing the outlined activities and objectives and could provide more detail on the rationale for each of the activities. Strong, detailed timelines are not provided in the logic model, although some of the sequencing can be discerned through studying the budget documents. Although the applicant notes that a cadre of highly effective principals and teachers will be developed to share lessons learned on personalized learning practices and to support scale-up beyond middle schools, additional narrative on how the reform proposal will be scaled up district-wide would be helpful to provide a more complete picture of how the proposal's activities will translate into meaningful reform to support district-wide change outside the participating middle schools. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides a clear vision for how its LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes are likely to result in improved student learning and performance. Summative assessments being used are identified, and the methodology for determining group is clearly explained. The goals are quite ambitious (almost completely eliminating achievement gaps under several of the subgroups for several specific goals). Students with disabilities are not included in the charts focused on reducing achievement gaps; in fact, given that such students have three alternatives to the general diploma, the district actually wrote that calculating achievement gaps for these students is "an unnecessary exercise," a distinct weakness in this area of the application.</p> <p>In a number of goals, the 2012-2013 baselines are lower than the baseline from 2011-2012, which is not explained. The application could benefit from identifying what specific strategies are being employed to advance the performance of ELL students, the subgroup where the annual achievement gap targets remain significantly larger than those for other subgroups by the end of the grant period.</p> <p>Graduation rates are addressed with ambitious targets, but no causal link is clearly fleshed out between the middle school reforms in this proposal and such aggressive increases in graduation rates.</p> <p>Increased college enrollment rates are also addressed, although the data on chart for (A)(4)(d) seems to contain data errors (the overall baseline is 71 percent, but the highest subgroup baseline, for Caucasians, is 59 percent). It is also not clear how, if the Caucasian college enrollment rate on this chart increases by 3 percent a year, and if the other subgroups increase by 5 percent a year, the overall rate of college enrollment increases by only 2 percent. A similar problem is found on the chart for (A)(4)(c).</p> <p>A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides a detailed narrative of how, over the past four years, the district has engaged in a number of initiatives and reform practices designed to improve student learning outcomes, improve graduation rates, and reduce achievement gaps for all students, slowly transforming its culture with pockets of innovation that promote personalized learning needs and interests. Graduation rates increased by 7 percent between 2008 and 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading and high school reading and math proficiency rates increased overall, as well as for Hispanic and students in poverty (it is not clear why 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math proficiency gains were not included). In high school math and reading, achievements gaps declined over those years (2010-2011 to 2012-13). Significant growth, especially among Hispanics, has been registered between 2008-98 and 2012-13 in AP enrollment. Applicant claims it has established, over the last four years, a track record of creating ambitious and significant reform in seven underperforming schools, but provides proficiency gains from only from one such middle school. Another low-performing school (elementary) was redesigned as an extra-time, magnet school, with promising initial results. Applicant does not address college enrollment rates or discuss the district's record of making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. As a result, the information provided provides an incomplete record of success, and a score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant has a high level of transparency in its processed, practices, and investment and has awards and accolades for its transparency and making financial and policy information freely available. Actual personnel salaries for instructional and support staff are published on-line. School-level budgeted expenditures are made public every May during the annual budget approval process. Appendix 6 demonstrates the high-level of detail for personnel and non-personnel costs for all middle schools in the district.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant provides a well-detailed summary of the state context for implementation, describing the state's No Child Left Behind waiver, under which it has adopted college and career ready standards, implemented a new school accountability system, and created a new Teacher Evaluation System effective this school year. The State will fully implement CCSS by 2014-15, and the applicant has already completed full implementation of CCSS instruction across all grades K-12. New graduation requirements are in effect, and a School Leadership Institute has been created to broker collaborative efforts between school districts and institutions of higher education. The reforms in this proposal dovetail with state reform efforts and will strengthen individual schools' ability to comply with state requirements, promote college and career-readiness skills, and support personalized learning environments for effective teaching and learning. Overall, the applicant provides a clear sense of the conditions and autonomy that exist to allow it to implement personalized learning environments for effective teaching and learning.

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

15

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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant describes how it involved over 700 individuals, principals, educators, postsecondary education experts and representative from various community organizations in the planning and revision process of its grant application. In addition to interviews and collaborative working sessions, several tailored surveys were sent to constituent groups, with significant response levels recorded. The survey responses, however, are all over the board, with a distinct lack of consensus that is not addressed between the responses from teachers and principals. Broad stakeholder support is demonstrated in the letters of support from diverse stakeholders, but a letter from the union is conspicuously missing. Collaborative meetings with union representation are described as being held, but evidence of direct engagement and support from the union (beyond the signature of the collective bargaining representation at the beginning of the application) is not provided. It is also not specified if students were included in the development of the proposal (through surveys or other means). On the whole, the applicant has demonstrated a partial level of meaningful stakeholder engagement and support, and a score in the middle point range is awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant provides a detailed narrative for improving learning by personalizing the learning environment through student-driven learning, personalized learning teams, and "anytime, anywhere" learning, but it does not comprehensively address the elements of a high-quality plan, as defined in the notice. The proposal develops a strategic approach for teachers that includes initial and ongoing professional development to building opportunities for teachers to actively collaborate, share, and utilize personal learning practices (covered under (C)(2), below). The CCSS are aligned with instructional technologies that will engage students with multiple approaches and sensory stimuli in order to meet different learning styles. Students will be prepared to perform according to National Education Technology Standards, and the proposal embraces will purposefully support all subgroups of students in improve learning in reading, science, and math, helping students to grow as individuals and as learners. The proposal seeks to address the limitation of digital techbooks by increasing the number of laptops in classrooms and to establish "guiding" relationships for all students with at least one caring adult. A well-targeted college and career readiness elective program for high-need students will be scaled up in all middle schools. The narrative provides a well-developed example of what a typical learning experience in the classroom might look like for a student attending a Personalized Learning Magnet School. The narrative touches on most but not all of criterion (C)(1)'s required elements, and does so with various levels of depth. A score in the middle range is awarded.

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

20

11

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant provides a detailed narrative for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment around the student-centered values of excel, explore, equip, and engage, but it does not comprehensively address the elements of a high-quality plan, as defined in the notice. A strength is the scholarly research cited. The application describes a whole-school environment that embraces the values of rigor, relevance, and relationship with regard to successful adolescent development. A detailed description of what teaching under the proposal would look like is provided, and a process of supporting teacher with actionable feedback under the State teacher evaluation system is outlined. The

proposal makes clear that implementation will require dramatic changes in how lessons are delivered and how teachers teach, requiring principal leadership and ongoing professional learning supports. The site team (principal, instructional coach, and technology specialist at each middle school) will receive training and supports from the new district Office of Innovation, but it is hard to visualize how this new Office is going to impact the schools it serves (vague goals, vague parties responsible for specific action steps). While Table 3.1 provides an implementation plan showing specific activities that must be completed in the fall, spring, and summer of each grant year by specific actors, some elements of a high-quality plan (rationales for the activities, all responsible parties, deliverables) are missing or inconsistently presented. A lack of connection between the middle school years that this application focuses on and the high school level is noted. Overall, the proposal addresses most, but not all, of the required elements of criterion (C)(2) and does so with various levels of depth. A score in the middle point range is awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Applicant details how an Office of Innovation will be created that accelerates school improvement efforts and initiates and sustains efforts to decrease achievement gaps by providing services and supports to all participating schools. The president of the teachers union and other union-selected practitioners will partner with the office on innovative practices that transform the work of teachers. Site-based teams will drive implementation, with focus on the National Educational Technology Standards. A high-quality plan, as defined in the notice, is not provided, just more general narrative, so it is not always clear the specific actors, activities, timelines, and rationales for each aspect of the LEA's role in facilitating personalized learning. The discussion on the New Mexico School Leadership Institute seems misplaced, as it is not clear that that is an LEA-led or –created institution. Sub-elements (c) through (e) are not clearly covered in the narrative for this criterion, although some evidence supporting these sub-elements is provided in other parts of the application. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Applicant provides an clear, detailed plan for ensuring that all participants have access to necessary content and learning resources, as well as appropriate levels of technical support to implement the personalized learning environment. The proposal details how aspects of the LEA and school infrastructure (Technology Office, systems, school site support, and Project Red) support personalized learning. The School Site teams, especially the technology specialists, will work with a small team of district-level data coaches to provide expertise and customized analysis of student achievement as displayed in the district's Instructional Management System. Several approaches are being enlisted to help students who do not have computer, tablets, or smart phones at home be able to access devices and the Internet. A sample infrastructure plan is provided, but it is not clear that it is intended to be an actual high-quality plan for project implementation or a sample for each school to use as guidelines. Regardless, not every aspect of a high-quality plan is present (actions are not closely linked to goals and rationales provided, although responsible actors and timelines are provided). Sub-elements (c) (information technology systems allowing parents and students to export information in open data format) and (d) (inter-operable data systems between LEA and schools) are not adequately addressed in the narrative for this criterion. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Applicant will contract with an outside evaluator and identifies guiding questions for the external evaluation. An 11-element continuous improvement plan is included that will guide implementation; it does not contain all elements of a high-quality plan, but does list broad strategies, activities, and qualitative outcome measures. Types of data collection are outlined, and the project implementation team will meet frequently to assess activities, milestones, successes, and setback and involve all principals and school leaders in planning and continuous improvement summits each summer. Applicant does not</p>		

address how it will share information publicly with on the quality of the project's investments under this grant. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant includes a Communication Plan aimed at ensuring that information is exchanged on a regular basis between all internal and external groups and at keeping such stakeholders apprised of progress and results, using purposeful communications methods and feedback cycles to specific groups (Table 5.2). The proposal describes the Advisory Council that will act as an external oversight committee, the role of the Innovation Director and Project Manager, and the responsibilities of each sire team. The Communication Plan does not contain all elements of a high-quality plan, as defined in the notice, but does include the methods and frequency with which specific participants will communicate and engage with internal and external stakeholders. In general, this communication plan, while incomplete, is somewhat likely to be effective. A score in the middle of the point range is awarded.

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant has collected baseline information on 13 performance measures by subgroups and across 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade bands to track over the course of the grant period to gain insight, assess effectiveness, and guide successful implementation of efforts. The measures are tied to the District's overall LEA-wide goals and standard assessment practices and were chosen to give rigorous, timely, and formative leading feedback on specific areas of interest regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. The goals to lower the achievement gap by 5% for underserved subgroups as well as to increase overall student performance by 3 percent are suitably ambitious yet achievable. Reflecting strong thought to the differing rates of accelerated learning that is likely to be shown among middle school student achievement, the measures tend towards differing and accelerated student success rates across subgroups by 2 percent to 5 percent, while the district's overall rate of improvement is set for 3 percent. Two social/emotional measures are also selected and explained. The performance measure charts are complete and well thought through. The Program Manager and external evaluator will prepare annual performance reports that will be shared among all partners and stakeholders, leading to program adjustments as indicated by feedback and data. A score in the high range is awarded.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant presents a high-quality plan for rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the grant-funded activities using a chart that meet the required elements, as defined in the notice (responsible parties, benchmark activities and deliverables, timelines, and goals). The Program Manager will collect benchmark data (participant information, meeting and activity feedback, anecdotal records, program documents) that will information the Innovation and project leadership on a continuous basis. The Data Specialist and Evaluator will serve as the clearinghouse for all data collection and will complete required data analysis. An external evaluation team will focus on summative evaluation. Overall, the applicant provides strong evidence that its plan will rigorously evaluate grant-funded activities. Overall A score in the high range is awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant's budget identifies all funds that will supports the project, but does not break the non-RTTD funds down by source. The budget is well-developed and, in light of the proposal's detailed policy reforms described throughout the application, both reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of each sub-project contained in the proposal. The narrative provides a rationale for the investments, although additional information would be helpful on where the non-RTTD funds are specifically coming from (those funds are presented in a single non-grant line item for each project within the overall proposal). Applicant does not clearly identify the funds that will be used for ongoing operational costs, although that is partially apparent through the narrative throughout the application. Application would be

strengthened by greater focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments, although the (F)(2) budget narrative touches on this sub-element. A score in the top of the middle point range is awarded.

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

**10**

**4**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant does not provide a high-quality plan, as defined in the notice, for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The narrative for this criterion does address the issue, however. For example, after the initial years of establishing the final new sites in the college and career elective programs for high-needs students, costs decrease significantly with much lower licensing fees and professional development for teachers. Additionally, given such a high volume of schools and teachers, the District will be able to host the continuing education trainings locally for participating educators allowing for future sustainability and reasonable ongoing costs. Only an estimated 6 percent of the budget request is estimated to be for recurring future costs (technology specialists, STEM resource teacher, and braided funding to support the parent community/school coordinators). It is not clear how training for teachers who join the target schools after the grant period will be funded. It is not clear why scaling up beyond middle schools in the high school years is not addressed. Overall, the applicant provides an incomplete and only partially credible approach to ensuring the sustainability of the proposal's project goals. A score in the middle point range is awarded.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant proposes to use the competitive priority to focus on its "engage" strategy, specifically in the areas of parental engagement (scale up of Parent University into middle schools), collective impact, and school climate. Two performance measures are included, both related to school climate (habitual truancy) and neither focused on family or community supports, as required in sub-element (2). It is not clear why performance measures were not added related to parent engagement and collective impact. Additionally, the narrative only broadly touches on aspects of sub-elements (3) through (6), which include detailed requirements. Because the narrative is only partially responsive to the six required sub-elements of this criterion and does not provide a fully developed plan for using the partnership to augment schools' resources to address students' social, emotional, and behavior needs, a score in the middle of the point range is awarded.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

This application coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to promote personalized learning environments. The proposal has a clear focus on creating personalized learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching, accelerate student achievement, and improve teacher effectiveness. In its Strategic Academic Plan, the district articulates clear goals to raise overall student achievement, close achievement gaps, raise the graduation rate, and improve failing schools and strengthen school communities. Applicant's proposal seeks to create an effective research-based personalized learning initiative to strategically implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and prepare for content and assessments delivered online through interactive, instructional technologies. Applicant makes a strong case for selecting the district's middle schools as the focus of their proposal, which is focused around four strategies: equip, explore; engage, and excel. These strategies, as defined in the application, will include activities and supports for school leaders and teachers, increased use of modern instructional technologies, ongoing site-based professional learning, and continuous improvement cycles to ensure that the district's middle schools transition seamlessly into robust personalized learning environments.

Total	210	130
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

### Application #0075NM-2 for Albuquerque Public Schools

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has set forth a clear and coherent reform vision through its Equip, Explore, Engage for School Excellence (E4) proposal. Their proposed initiative focuses on the transformation of middle schools.

- The LEA has addressed the core educational assurance areas through the creation of a Strategic Academic Plan to inform their proposed efforts.
  - Regarding adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy, the LEA has adopted Common Core State Standards and aligned instructional technologies. They have launched a college and career readiness elective program that has been piloted with 25 middle and high schools. They plan to share "lessons learned on personalized learning practices and to support scale up beyond middle schools," and focus on counseling to support the 8th-9th grade transition with increased supports for college and career counseling.
  - Regarding building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction, the LEA has described a "sample learning experience" showing how the elements of equip, explore, engage, and excel would involve students, teachers, principals and parents making use of data systems to support learning and analysis of student growth and success. Their planned upgrades to the AIMS will share information among key stakeholders and inform data driven instruction.
  - Regarding recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most, the LEA has planned for teacher evaluation through the NMTEACH Evaluation System to recognize exemplary practices and provide routes to improvement, and a PAR program to provide peer feedback among teachers. The middle schools are supported by instructional coaches (an effort supported by the Union), with additional middle school technology specialists proposed in the RTT-D application.
  - Regarding turning around our lowest-achieving schools, the proposed Office of Innovation will be charged with a focus on school improvement through support of principals, and the strong partnership with the Union suggests that significant reforms are likely to have participant buy-in. It is less clear whether moving strong practitioners to high need schools is planned for or supported by stakeholders.
- Regarding its approach to goals of accelerating student achievement, LEA has addressed
  - Accelerating student achievement via a focus on social emotional learning and engagement with adult mentors (educators, counselors, parents, community mentors)
  - Deepening student learning via efforts under four strategies - Equip, with a focus on technology access and user capacity-building, Explore, with a focus on student-interest-driven learning and transformation of teacher practices, Engage, with a focus on research-supported school- and district-transformation efforts as described by Bryk et al, and Excel: with a focus on school improvement and closing of achievement gaps.
  - Increasing equity through personal student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests via the Explore and Excel strategies listed above. In addition, the LEA plans to close technology digital divides through partnerships with libraries, internet providers and kiosk operators to bring services and access to those without.
- Regarding the description of the classroom experience for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments, the LEA effectively describes needed changes to the existing structures to engage students

and help them explore learning.

In sum, the LEA has set forth strong evidence for many of the required criteria, though shows less evidence for a plan to sustain students through college and toward successful post-secondary degree attainment, and thus merits a score in the low end of the high range.

**(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)**

**10**

**10**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has effectively and clearly identified plans to support high quality implementation of the proposal.

- Regarding their description of the school selection process, the LEA will involve all middle schools, which will either be identified as Personalized Learning Schools or Personalized Learning 1to1 Magnets. The LEA describes the rationale for the latter category, with the four target schools needing the most significant reforms. Their selection criteria and emphasis on middle school reform were based on community buy-in, also evidenced in section B4. The proposal design infuses technology into all participating schools, with 1to1 device support for educators in the Personalized Learning Schools and 1to1 device support for educators and students in the Magnets. This rationale is supported by the district’s participation in Project RED and research on serving middle school aged learners.
- The proposal focuses on all 27 middle schools in the LEA. They provide a rationale for their selection of this subsection of schools in the LEA as an intervention mechanism.
- The proposal will reach 19,278 students, and table A(2) provides a list of schools. 62% of students in those schools are low-income, 13,481 are identified as high-need, and 1,336 educators will be engaged.

As defined, all elements of the applicant’s approach to implementing reform are described. Their approach selects one type of school (middle schools) as a lever for LEA-wide intervention over time. Thus, this criterion merits a score in the high end of the range.

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

**10**

**6**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has set forth some elements of a high-quality plan to describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools to help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

- The LEA proposes an Office of Innovation to oversee grant activities and continue their impact after the grant period has concluded;
- Rationales are provided for key activities to be undertaken (e.g. professional development days) and these activities are themed under the four elements of the E4 model;
- Appropriate participants to effect large-scale change are described;
- Outcomes are described as short term and long term, but no timeline is provided in this section to support advancement toward short- and long-term goals;
- No specific correspondences are made between key participants (e.g. Leadership Team, Implementation Team) and deliverables pertaining to same or timelines for the production of deliverables.
- Several references are made to the effects of the middle school focus on other levels of schools (e.g. high schools), while few specifics are provided.

While several elements are effectively included, the lack of explicit correspondences between parties, key activities, and a concrete implementation timeline warrants a score in the middle range.

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

**10**

**6**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA sets forth somewhat ambitious and achievable goals for improved student learning and performance and increased equity. They anticipate effectively how to incorporate coming changes in state assessments.

- (a) Regarding performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth), the LEA has set forth goals for improvements across all groups, and are targeted at highly ambitious improvements over the grant period. For example, the grant forecasts improvements for male students from 45% proficiency in FY 11-12 to 71% proficiency at the end of the grant. Specific correspondences between the focus on middle school reform and the grade level

achievement data provided (4-11) were implicit or unstated.

- (b) Regarding decreasing achievement gaps, the proposal forecasts improvements for all student groups with gaps decreasing by 5% each year between highest-performing groups and underperforming groups. Students with disabilities are excluded from the achievement gap data, which obscures how achievement gaps along racial/ ethnic lines that also transfer into disproportionality of disability diagnosis would be closed.
- (c) Regarding graduation rates, the district shows a track record under the current superintendent of increasing graduation rates in the past, though it is unclear how increases in graduation rates from high schools during the proposed grant period will be directly attributed to reform efforts based in the middle schools.
- (d) and (e) Regarding college enrollment rates, the LEA has partnered with Mission Graduate to increase college degree enrollment and attainment, though it is unclear how directly the proposal will be able to link the proposed interventions with increased college enrollment and degree attainment.

While the LEA has addressed the required elements (e.g. a range of improvements from 3-5% per year is ambitious and achievable), they do not describe mechanisms through which their proposed personalized learning initiatives at the middle school level will lead directly or indirectly to these performance outcomes. They have not sufficiently connected these two critical areas, and thus merit a score in the middle range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA has demonstrated selected and various evidence of a their record of success in the past three years (not four, because of state level assessment restructuring) in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have included a description, graph, raw student data (proficiency, enrollment, AP participation), and other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to improve student learning over time.</li> <li>• Graduation rates have improved by 7% since 2008, showing a narrowing of performance between non-charter and charter schools.</li> <li>• They provide recent college enrollment rate data (71%) and describe that this is an increase, but do not provide prior years' data to evaluate the record of success.</li> <li>• Selected gains are represented (3d grade reading, H3 reading and math).</li> <li>• Seven underperforming schools have undergone significant restructuring; of these, data are shown from one, Ernie Pyle, showing 3-7% gains since 2010. Data from other underperforming schools are not shared.</li> <li>• The LEA has liaised with research experts (e.g. Wong Fillmore) to inform and advance their reform efforts.</li> <li>• Ways that the district has made student performance data available to various constituencies to improve participation, instruction, and services are not mentioned.</li> </ul> <p>Selected different initiatives are shared as evidence of success in the past three years (2010-present), though it is not clear that this has happened consistently across the district, and so the record of success is partial. As a result, this criterion ranks in the middle range.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA has demonstrated strong evidence of each required element in this section. Efforts toward transparency are led by the superintendent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual personnel salaries for instructional and support staff, teachers, and non-personnel expenditures are available on the district website.</li> </ul>		

- School-level budget information is shared publicly in regular meetings throughout the year.

Because of the high degree of transparency in making information available, this criterion ranks at the highest level.

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

**10**

**10**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has demonstrated solid evidence of successful conditions to implement the proposed interventions, with no requirements listed that question their autonomy or ability to implement proposed interventions.

- The state obtained an NCLB waiver to turn around low-performing schools, as evidenced by the state's adoption of college and career ready standards, a school accountability system, and a teacher evaluation system.
- The state has adopted Common Core, with full implementation planned for 2014-2015.
- The state will begin implementing a statewide college and career readiness instrument (PARCC) in 2014-2015.
- The Next Step Plan and graduation requirements that include at least one honors, advanced placement, or dual enrollment coursework are oriented toward college and career readiness in high school.
- The NMTEACH evaluation system supports school administrators in delivering actionable feedback to educators.
- The LEA participates in the New Mexico School Leadership Institute to support program redesign and develop principal capacity.

The above state-level initiatives support all state LEAs in preparation of students for college and career. Moreover, no conditions appear to exist that would impede or prevent the proposed reforms, and so this criterion ranks in the high range.

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

**15**

**5**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has demonstrated inconsistent evidence of stakeholder engagement through the proposal design and support thereof.

- The community survey received 377 responses, and highlighted priorities for technology personalization (e.g. interactive whiteboards, online resources, and mobile devices). Participants ranked various priorities evident in the proposal (e.g. high school credit for middle school coursework).
- Some respondents to the survey commented on the narrow nature and wording of the questions pointing respondents to preferred answers. It did seem, upon review of the structure of the survey, that many of the questions were yes/no questions, such as "Do you need professional development to implement an interactive classroom?", "Do you want to use technology for personalized instruction?" and "Should APS use technology for personalized instruction?" rather than discerning from the participants how they understand/ interpret "personalized instruction."
- Teacher survey responses highlighted practitioner dissatisfaction (e.g. 34.1% of teachers ranked the quality of their school's use of performance data as "minimally effective.")
- Both parents and teachers identified needs for more social workers in school settings.
- Teacher comments addressed a variety of dissatisfactions (e.g. standardized testing, lack of resources, student/family poverty, requirements of common core)
- Large majorities of principal respondents described teachers using technology to personalize learning; approximately equal numbers of teachers responded that they "wanted to use technology to personalize learning;" lack of parity between these questions makes it difficult to compare responses.
- While the vast majority of principals responded that their school site would embrace four extra professional development days during the summer, teachers were nearly equally split on the same question.
- The letters of support indicate that effective relationships have been built with city leadership, higher education, business, county community school partnerships.
- No evidence of a letter of support from the local teachers' union/ federation was included in the support materials, though the collective bargaining agreement is included in the appendices.
- No evidence of student engagement in the development and revision of the proposal was included.

Because of the inconsistencies between teacher responses and school leader responses, and the lack of evidence of support from several of the organizations mentioned, this criterion merits a score in the high end of the low range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The LEA has described proposed interventions at the middle school level, most of which focus on scaling up or extending existing initiatives for supporting middle school aged learners, with only a few new initiatives proposed. District-wide, they have technologies in place to support engagement. However, they do not describe in this section the components of a high-quality plan. Their "Carlos's day" scenario sets forth an example of a student experience in the revised program. In their high-quality plan (table 3.1) the LEA specifies a timeline, goals (largely focused on hiring, school redesign, and unspecified 'assessments of progress'), parties responsible, and high-altitude deliverables (e.g. principal evaluations leading to actionable feedback, without any description of how these evaluations correspond to proposed grant activities.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding engaging and empowering all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age appropriate manner, the proposal aims to expand access to guidance, college and career counseling to all middle school students. They propose to offer options to accelerate completion of high school credits. Students will engage in goal setting by 9th grade. Additionally, they propose "extra guidance and tutoris" to high-need, underperforming students, utilizing the WICR approach.</li> <li>In the sample student case study, examples are provided regarding how students may identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career-ready pathways. Students may take College and Career Readiness electives, offering group tutoring and homework help. Additionally, middle school students participate in the Next Step Plan to map college and career pathways, informing students' high school choices. Specific means to ensure that lower-engagement students participate in these options are not described.</li> <li>Specific ways in which parents are to participate include a "Getting Started Parent University" workshop and the use of "I-Parent" to check attendance records and proficiency data. This provides evidence for how the LEA proposes to help students and families check progress toward goals. Moreover, the case study elaborates how an individual student's choices over time would inform his high school choice, course offerings, and eventual college enrollment. Timelines for ensuring that this happens at scale across the district are not provided.</li> <li>The district as a whole has already developed culturally responsive practices to motivate and deepen individual student learning, resonant with the cultural backgrounds of key demographic groups (e.g. Latin American countries) and building off of students' strengths (e.g. bilingual/ dual language offerings.)</li> <li>Skill and trait development are described through alignment to the ISTE NETS-T standards, though specifics about how teachers might enact these standards in their instruction are not provided.</li> <li>The goal-setting process in middle school does seem to set up students for starting high school with a plan, though how that plan is to be revised over the period of high school is not described.</li> <li>The LEA describes plans to provide tools (e.g. laptops, techbooks) to more effectively enable student-driven investigations and access outside of school to technologies.</li> <li>Table 3.1 describes outreach to teachers, students and parents provide training and support to ensure that all understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Links between these processes and actual college enrollment and perseverance are not specified.</li> <li>No specific links after middle school to sustain students through high school and into college and career are made.</li> </ul> <p>In sum, while it is clear that the LEA has initiated a number of promising practices, it has not specified or concretized ways to enact the proposed changes at scale, and has neglected to address some key criteria (particularly around sustaining college- and career-ready momentum through high school and beyond) and so merits a score in the middle range.</p>		

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has proposed an approach to teaching and leading that is inconsistent regarding its plan to help educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students, in particular high-need students.

- Regarding educators' engagement in training and participation in professional teams,
  - the LEA proposes to continue work begun in 2010 to pilot the Common Core State Standards with related online tools, lessons, and content; moreover, teachers will be provided access through devices to engage in small group work.
  - assessment gathering and interrogation will be advanced by professional learning communities and collaborative learning groups.
  - the LEA has provided extensive citations of scholarly research literature in support of their proposed interventions, which is a strength.
  - the proposal describes that middle schools will be "encouraged to explore and adopt" several structures for effective collaboration, such as the Generation Schools model, the Essential Schools model, and schedules that ensure common planning time. How these would be required is unstated.
  - educator evaluations by administrators will be done via the NMTEACH system, which is already in place.
  - peer feedback mechanisms (PAR) are aligned with teacher induction and development and provide opportunities for struggling practitioners to be supported as they focus on improving their practices.
  - Instructional Coaches provide support and facilitate teachers' work in professional learning communities. The proposed site-based technology specialist will support this work, and their work is informed by the NETS standards for technology facilitation and leadership..
- Regarding developing educators' access to and capacity to use tools, data, and records to accelerate student progress, the LEA sets forth
  - participation in PLCs will support teachers' identification of good resources for learning.
  - a shift to "flipped classroom" practices, inquiry-based instruction and project based learning will focus time on engaging students in learning more interactively, and highlight learner interests.
  - educators will develop and deliver formative assessment strategies, supported by site-based technology specialists. These will be aligned with data systems to identify and close achievement gaps at the whole group and individual student level and faculty will interrogate the data through retreats.
  - proposed "family meetings" will engage learners in relational development with the faculty on-site.
- Regarding developing school leaders' capacity to training, policies, tools, data, and resources to build high quality learning environments,
  - the proposed Office of Innovation is responsible for training leadership teams, comprised of the Principal, Instructional Coach, and Technology Specialist.
  - outcomes are well articulated and aligned with Project RED work, which is already in place in the LEA.
  - specific goals for teachers' and leaders' development are oriented around increased interaction, increased comprehensibility, increased higher-order thinking skills, and positive learning environment.
  - four additional professional development days and a personalized learning summer institute are proposed; the survey results of teachers, however, showed only ambivalent support for extended learning time during the summer.

- Regarding the LEA plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective educators and leaders, especially in high-need settings and high-demand content areas and specialties,
  - the LEA describes that authentic educator evaluation means has helped to "attract great teachers to some of our hardest to staff schools."
  - no other specifics are provided about how the LEA proposes to increase the number of students receiving instruction from highly-effective teachers and school leaders.
  - the timeline sets forth general goals without concrete measures for evaluation (e.g. "assess profess and determine level of any necessary additional supports; continue to celebrate and promote personalized learning magnets.")

While the LEA makes frequent mention of supports for teachers through professional learning communities, the goals and deliverables are high altitude, unspecific and non-concrete. This in turn makes the elements of the high quality plan (parties responsible, deliverables) difficult to specify. Few specific proposed measures of evaluating effectiveness are provided.

Few connections to specific goals around increasing teachers' capacity to develop college- and career-ready learners are provided. As a result, this criterion ranks at the low end of the middle range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA proposes changes to the organization of the district office to support proposed initiatives, centered on the launch of an Office of Innovation. In setting forth the focus and charge of this office,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal describes support of the head of the teachers' union for past collaborative efforts, however, no letter of support was provided from the teachers' union.</li> <li>• the proposed Personalized Learning Summer Institutes will be designed by site teams, who will also be given autonomy over scheduling, calendars, staffing and roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• the description of previous work with Next System schools includes expansion of AP offerings, but the focus elsewhere on the middle schools calls this into tension. No detail is provided connecting proposed interventions in middle schools (e.g. high school pathway mapping) and these initiatives around AP coursework.</li> <li>• it is clear that several promising practices have begun in the district, but in this section they are not connected to the new ways in which the Office of Innovation will significantly depart from district leadership practices.</li> <li>• no mention is made of how the increased access of teachers to devices to support their learning would connect, for example, to the proposed learning institutes.</li> <li>• there is no mention of how students would earn credit based on mastery.</li> <li>• only glancing mention is made ("APS offers students a variety of options to meet individual interests, individual needs and to remove barriers to student progress") of LEA plans to specifically serve, adapt materials for, and include learners with diverse needs.</li> <li>• because of the lack of data presented on forecast gains for students with disabilities (as they have been excluded from the data set), specific connections to criterion (e) are unmet. Despite descriptions of multiple options available to students, they have not established how proposed resources and practices would be adaptable and accessible to all students, especially those who may have language learning needs or diagnosed disabilities requiring accommodations.</li> </ul> <p>While the Office of Innovation has a commendable mission, the lack of concrete and distinct leadership mission, expectations, and deliverables are a weakness. This criterion ranks at the high end of the low range.</p>		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA has set forth a clear plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure to support students and educators with appropriate supports and resources.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding students', parents', educators', and other stakeholders' access to content, tools and resources in and out of school,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ the district currently is investing in an upgrade to support integration between the Student Information system and the APS Instructional Management System. Use of this system has increased significantly in the past two years, from 30% usage to 70% usage. How those data break down into student, educator, and parent access is not specified.</li> <li>◦ the AIMS system supports educators in CCSS-aligned interrogations of individual, subgroup, class, and school performance data. The proposed school-based technology specialist will support educators in increasing their use of these data.</li> <li>◦ the proposal increases community technology access resources, such as a device loan program from school libraries, and expanding community technology kiosks (CLICK) providing wireless access to communities.</li> <li>◦ the proposal will support teachers in holding "virtual office hours", though it is not clear that this is an idea supported by teachers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regarding students', parents', educators', and other stakeholders' access to technical support,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ the proposal expands APS Parent University to inform parents about technologies and encourage them to explore them; the proposal continues the use of i-Parent, giving access to parents and students about attendance, grades, assignments and tests.</li> <li>◦ the Chief Technology Officer will continue to implement recommendations aligned with Project RED.</li> <li>◦ the sample infrastructure plan provides a high level of specificity about the tasks and parties responsible and anticipates support needs effectively.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regarding support of students' and parents' ability to export learning data, no mention is made.</li> <li>• Regarding the use of interoperable data systems, the plan proposes greater integration between SIS and AIMS, though whether these include human resources data and budget data is not identified.</li> </ul>		
<p>The LEA has effectively addressed most of the areas in this criterion, though it omits mention of interoperability with human resources and budget data. As a result, it merits a score in the middle of the high range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA has a clear plan to analyze the effectiveness of their proposed interventions during and beyond the grant period. Some of their proposed questions for evaluation could be more specific.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An outside evaluator will focus on the impact of the Office of Innovation on principal effectiveness and school improvement efforts, the impact of teachers' use of personalized learning strategies on their students' learning, and the impact of personalized learning environments on student engagement and achievement.</li> <li>• The outside evaluator will liaise to the Office of Innovation Director and the Program Manager to assess implementation and impact.</li> <li>• 11 elements of the proposed E4 plan will be examined (table 5.1). Some of the correlations between activity implementation and outcome measure were clearer than others. For example, the Office of Innovation's outcome measure is "To what extent has the District improved school grades?" while the sum of the proposal addresses much more than student grades.</li> <li>• Some of the outcome measures suggested natural means of measurement (e.g. increased numbers of effective and highly effective principals and teachers) while others were more vague (e.g. to what extent has the program improved student outcomes?)</li> <li>• No mention is made of the plan to publicly share information on the quality of investments.</li> <li>• The continuous improvement data collection items focus on analyzing instructional practices and providing feedback, and are appropriate to the proposed interventions.</li> </ul>		
<p>The plan for program review and continuous improvement effectively captures some of the salient elements of the proposal,</p>		

while remaining vague on others, and so qualifies for a score in the middle range.

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

**5**

**2**

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has created a multipronged plan to engage internal and external partners through the proposed grant period and ensure their participation throughout. However, specific ways in which they will seek improvements to the plan itself are unspecified.

- The proposal advisory council will include public and private members and be charged with monitoring and reporting on grant activities and effectiveness.
- The LEA plans for regular communication between the district-level leadership (Innovation Director, Superintendent, Leadership Team, Board of Education). These members will meet bi-monthly with the Union.
- The Program Manager will liaise between school-based leadership teams and the Innovation director throughout.
- Site teams will meet monthly to maintain engagement.
- Teachers will be "asked often for input, feedback," and resources.
- The LEA plans to engage the general public through regular meetings, the district website, and newsletters.

It is not clear from this response that the LEA has a clear plan to seek improvements to the grant throughout the implementation time period, or how the above activities represent a new vision as opposed to "business as usual." As a result, this criterion merits a low score.

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

**5**

**2**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA has set forth performance measures aligned to their proposed intervention focus on the district middle schools. However, these do not fully align to the terrain of the proposal, providing only a partial view of project effectiveness.

- 13 performance measures will be gathered across 6th-8th grade bands, and these performance measures are tied to district-wide goals. Rationales are provided for these performance measures, meeting criterion E.3.a.
- Performance measures are aligned with the proposal goals of improving achievement and closing achievement gaps and are administered at regular and appropriate intervals, meeting criterion E.3.b.
- The LEA proposes to increase highly effective educators by 5% and effective educators by 10%. It was not clear from the proposal whether these highly effective and effective educators are serving at the middle school level, or in the 1to1 learning schools.
- The proposed 6th-8th grade performance measures are distributed across content areas (e.g. SBA Science, AVID students taking Algebra 1, ELL students performing at FEP level at 8th grade exit), as well as an "On track CCR indicator for grade 9" which has a different and more ambitious acceleration than the other performance measures, aiming for an eventual increase by 7% at grant end.
- Social-emotional measures are captured via a focus on habitual truancy and evaluation of school climate safety; however, as there are other planned social-emotional interventions mentioned (increased access to guidance and career counseling, "family" relationships with school staff) it seems like some key data would remain unexamined. However, the proposal notes that addressing the truancy issue is ranked highly by community stakeholders.
- No mention is made of performance measures that would address college- and career-readiness after 9th grade.
- No specific performance measures aim at evaluation of the effectiveness of personalized learning practices or out-of-school learning opportunities.
- No specific mention is made of how the LEA proposes to improve measures over time if they provide insufficient for project evaluation.
- No mention is made of correlation between these performance measures and educator evaluation and remediation.

- No mention is made of how student-interest-driven learning outcomes will be addressed, though this is a key element of the proposal.

Despite the inclusion of multiple and varied performance measures, because of the significant omissions regarding evaluation of key elements proposed by the LEA, particularly around "explore" and "engage", this criterion merits a low score.

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

**5**

**4**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA proposed role of Program Manager will be charged with collecting benchmark data to evaluate the effectiveness of project investments over time. This person will liaise to the Innovation Director and project leadership. An external evaluation team will administer and collect feedback forms, surveys, interviews, observations, and questionnaires.

- the LEA's plan to evaluate project effectiveness incorporates carefully considered and well-triangulated data sources.
- they have an existing partnership with the University of New Mexico to examine effectiveness of their College and Career Elective Program.
- the plan for examining program effectiveness is concrete, with specific goals, parties responsible, and clear timeline.
- specific deliverables (reporting to stakeholders, delivery of analyses of performance) are not specified.

Because of the high degree of specificity regarding the plan to implement and evaluate effectiveness of grant activities, but because of the lack of specific deliverables in reporting, this criterion merits a high score.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA proposal budget is clear and concrete, and focuses on investments that are both short term (expanding access to technologies and devices, implementing interoperable data systems) and long-term (delivering ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders.) They also plan to sustain these investments over time after the period of the grant ends.

- The expansion of college- and career-readiness programs is warranted and coherent, and the costs are in keeping with their initial efforts in pilot schools. They effectively explain their rationale for increased costs in the first years and lesser costs thereafter.
- They effectively describe one-time costs versus ongoing operational costs. Recurring costs are relatively low, with 6% after the grant period allocated to technology specialists, STEM resource teachers, and funding to support parent community/ school coordinators.
- The budget includes 8% of costs from operations and other partners.
- The budget items are aligned with the structure of the E4 model and appear appropriate to the anticipated tasks and responsibilities.
- Funds that will be used for one-time investments (e.g. technology supplies) are differentiated from ongoing operational costs (e.g. Innovation Director).
- The budget does not describe sources of funding from the State or other Federal monies contributing to the project.

The budget and provided rationale effectively addresses all required elements listed in this criterion with a high level of detail, and thus merits a score in the high range.

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

**10**

**4**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

This proposal is largely aimed at capacity-building among faculty and scaling up of promising practices, as coordinated by the Office of Innovation. They do not anticipate needing to sustain significant budgetary costs after the grant period.

The proposal does not anticipate or specify needs after the period of the grant, and describes sustaining capacity at all 27 middle schools with the revised programs and approaches, with the exception of the Office of Innovation Director and site-based technology specialists.

- Nearly all of the requested funds focus on non-recurring costs.
- No mention is made of State or other local sources of funding.
- It is unclear how teachers who may join the district after the grant period ends would be supported in developing personalized learning practices.
- No mention is made of generalizing successful practices identified at the middle school level either into elementary or high school settings.
- No improvements are emphasized beyond the goals specified in the proposal beyond, for example, 75% of core content classroom instructional technologies.
- No description is provided of the LEA's plan to evaluate effectiveness of past investments to inform future investments.
- The narrative does not fully address all the elements of a high quality plan.

Little evidence is provided for continuation of efforts begun in the grant proposal after its end, and so this proposal merits a low score in the middle range.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The LEA evidences several ways that they provide family supports to address social, emotional, or behavioral needs of students. However, their plan to evaluate coherence among these strategies and effectiveness thereof is limited.

- They propose expansion of its "Parent University" offerings into the middle school setting, supported by Parent-Community coordinators working in each of the Personalized Learning Magnet Schools.
- The parent engagement policy supports family participation in children's learning experiences.
- The LEA has a plan for facilitating background checks so that parents may volunteer in schools, particularly around the issue of habitual truancy.
- Collaborations with Mission Graduate, the UNM Center for Education Policy and Research, and ABC Community Schools are various ways in which the district supports whole-child wellness (e.g. ABC Community schools provides mental and physical healthcare, dental care, childcare, and after school resources and tutoring.) Letters of support from these organizations provide additional evidence of their engagement and sense of shared purpose.
- The Safe School Ambassadors program supports students in creating kind schools and minimizing aggression and violence; SSA is already in place at 16 middle schools, with targeted expansion to the remaining 11 middle schools should the grant be funded.
- They dedicate resources and emphasis to supporting culturally responsive counseling practices for guidance, college- and career-readiness educators.
- The only performance measures planned to evaluate effectiveness of these efforts are the Habitual Truancy and School Climate Safety measures.
- No planned evaluations of parent engagement or volunteerism are shared, nor evaluations of community partnerships.
- No specific interventions targeted at the highest-need students or schools are identified.

Because of the incomplete plan for evaluating impact of planned community partnerships and social emotional interventions, this criterion merits a score in the middle range.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

In sum, the LEA has set forth a plan for strategically intervening in the practices of its middle school teachers, school leaders, students, and families. However, there are multiple instances where they provided partial or broad descriptions of the proposed interventions, with little correspondence to how they would result in higher learning outcomes or increased college- and career-readiness among the students. They plan for access to tools and devices but provide little detail about how those will be aligned to specific curriculum initiatives or pedagogical transformations. Professional learning opportunities focus on ability to use tools without developing a common sense of purpose or goals. The survey data for teachers and principals reveal lack of consensus and buy-in for proposed changes. Few specifics are provided about how they propose to close achievement gaps through the interventions set forth. As such, they have not met the absolute priority for this grant.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>130</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0075NM-3 for Albuquerque Public Schools

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant offers strong evidence of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that (a) Builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas; (b) articulates a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support; and (c) describes what the personalized learning environment classroom experience will be like for students and teachers.

With the district's recent implementation of the Common Core Standards, the applicant's plan offers middle school students from all backgrounds access to technology and 24/7 connectivity in order to provide personalized learning plans. A centralized Office of Innovation will support principals and their teachers in implementing technology solutions, and teachers will receive professional development and on-site training and support to implement the proposed plan. The interoperable AIMS data system integrates data from a variety of databases into an interface that educators, parents, students, and counselors can access to monitor student performance.

The applicant's vision is research-based and a clear and credible approach to offering students, teachers, and administrator's the tools to develop personalized learning that is college- and career-ready. Wraparound services, including the support of counselors, safe school ambassadors, parents, and community partners, will support stated goals

of cultural proficiency and social justice that will encourage high aspirations for all students.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant offers strong evidence of an implementation approach incorporating schools, grade bands, or subject areas that will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation.

The applicant's rationale for selection of all of its middle school is sound, both from a research/developmental perspective(citing research from the Association for Middle Level Education) and from a district needs perspective. Schools were selected based on the poor academic performance of the lowest quartile in most schools,as well as selected rates of disciplinary action reduction, high-stakes test score increases, drop-out rate reductions, and graduation rate increases.

The strategy for segmenting the schools into two different levels of treatment appears to be a good allocation of resources. The four schools with the lowest performance will receive Personalized Learning Magnet implementation, while the other 23 will receive Personalized Learning Schools. The planned supports to 19,278 middle school students and 1336 educators, whom the applicant feels have not been sufficiently supported previously, will offer lasting benefits to the school system as those students mature into high schools.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides moderate evidence of a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will: (a) be scaled up to support district- wide change; (b) will help the applicant reach its outcome goals; and (c) will improve student learning outcomes for all students served.

The applicant offers a logic model that highlights the synergies between the proposed plan and the district's overall Strategic Academic Plan to increase academic performance and decrease achievement gaps. The proposed personnel and teams, activities and objectives, and short-term outcomes appear ambitious yet achievable, and the involvement of the entire school community through its Engage strategy of Parent University, public/private partnerships, and Safe Schools programs, appears especially strong.

The application would benefit from additional detail regarding timelines and systems to ensure accountability. Additionally, more detail about the plan to scale-up the initiative beyond the participating middle schools would be helpful.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides strong evidence of the likelihood that the proposed project will 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 the LEA(s), overall and by assessments ; (b) Decreasing achievement gaps; (c) Graduation rates; and (d) College enrollment .

The proposed rates of increase by subgroup for grades 3-10, generally appear ambitious yet achievable for most proficiency levels; some, like reading scores for Grade 4 English Language Learners increasing from 18.5% to 57.7%, or raising math proficiency rates of grade 10 English Language Learners 10X over the proposed period, may be a bit out of reach. Additionally, it is unclear what specific strategies would support such significant increases for English Language Learners.

The proposed reduction in achievement gaps is also generally ambitious yet achievable, although some subgroup gaps, such as the 26.6% gap for Hispanic 3<sup>rd</sup> grade readers, or 26% and 27% gaps for African-American and Hispanic 8<sup>th</sup> grade readers, respectively, may be difficult to close completely over the proposed period. Similarly, the 30.8% gap for Grade 7 African American Math scores may be difficult to close completely, although the goal is admirable. As above, specific strategies to address these significant gaps would strengthen the application.

The district has clearly experienced increases its high school graduation rates; however, the link between the proposed

program and the increase in high school graduation and college enrollment rates is not clearly stated within the application. Further, it is unclear how the overall Post-Grant graduation rate can be 80% when none of the subgroups, including that of the largest Caucasian subgroup, have rates higher than 74%.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides moderate evidence of a record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity through (a) improving student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates; (b) achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving or low-performing schools ; and (c) making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. The applicant offers highlights of strong results under new district leadership within particular grades, subgroups within grades, or within particular programs; however, the application would benefit from more data that covers the progress or achievements of all participating schools.</p> <p>The applicant offers successful highlights of the results of new district leadership, innovative programs and initiatives, and a focus on turning around low-performing schools and increasing graduation rates. District reforms such as extending school days and developing alternative learning environments has increased graduation rates by 7% over the last four years. Performance among highest-need students has also significantly increased; for example, by 9.7% for High School reading scores for low-income students and by 7.2% for Hispanic students since 2010.</p> <p>Significant increases in dual-credit enrollment, including with a postsecondary institution supporting Native American students; AP enrollment, including that of Hispanic students; and FAFSA completion rates bode well for readying students for college and career paths.</p> <p>The applicant shows some successful scale-up experience through its college and career readiness elective program, as well as successful school-turnaround experience in which significant culture change is created by administrators and teachers working together. More complete data regarding college enrollment data would benefit the application.</p> <p>Additionally, more information about how student performance data has been made available to students, educators, and parents would strengthen the application.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides strong evidence of the high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.</p> <p>Appendix 6 provides examples of the detailed school-level expenditure data available to the public for each school via websites and via hard copy. Budgets for teachers, administrators, support staff, and for non-personnel expenses are clearly laid out. Additionally, the Superintendent received a state award for transparency in 2010.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides moderate evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>The state has overseen mandates regarding Common Core Standards, College- and Career Readiness instruction, and</p>		

graduation requirements that dovetail with the specifics of this proposal to develop personalized learning environments. Specifically, student achievement data that is now tied to school growth, and differentiated reporting of growth among the bottom quartile and upper three quartiles has highlighted for district administrators the need for personalized instruction to meet individual student needs. However, the applicant did not provide a strong enough case to confirm that the state will allow LEAs the autonomy to implement their proposed project to meet those goals.

The district will reorganize its Central Office to add an Office of Innovation to provide principals with training, orientation, and implementation assistance.

Within the State's comments in Appendix 10, it is clear that the state acknowledges the focus on personalized learning environments, but the applicant does not cite specific state laws, statutes, directives, or initiatives that authorize the development of flexible personalized learning environments.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

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

**15**

**10**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides moderate evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. The initiative received strong support from educator surveys, principal forums, and parent and community organizations.

Over 700 internal and external stakeholders, including parents, administrators, teachers, community partners, and postsecondary institutions provided their feedback through a variety of surveys and working sessions, including sessions with union representation.

Although some of the survey questions appear slightly biased and leading, (for example, "Would you embrace 4 extra structured PD days in the summer?") Appendix 8 gives a strong sense of the variety of thoughtful engagement of stakeholders in the planning process. Appendix 9 provides numerous letters of support from schools, students, and other community leaders.

Although the applicant states that teachers unions supported the proposal, it does not appear that they provided an official letter of support.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Through its high quality plan/logic model and discussion of the philosophy and logistical framework for achieving its vision of personalized learning environments, the applicant provides a moderately strong case for its project. The foundation of the proposed plan rests on students' mastery of six essential skills, as espoused by the International Society for Technology in Education, including Creativity and Innovation; Digital Citizenship; Research and Information Fluency; and Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decisionmaking. The breadth and depth of the project's plan for developing these skills is exciting and comprehensive in scope.

With the built-in advantage of being a minority majority state, the district's students can capitalize on their rich cultural history to share diverse experiences and points of view. Additionally, the district will offer dual-language programs in math and throughout all middle schools.

The district has secured an \$11.3 million, 7 year contract with a Core-aligned digital source to deliver science, health, and social studies curriculum, including videos, interactive lessons, educational games, reading passages, and glossaries. The materials are language-flexible for non-English speakers, and the textbooks can be accessed through any device, making them available to families without computers.

The applicant does not sufficiently address how frequently individual student data will be available and utilized by students, parents, and teachers to assess mastery of college- and career-ready concepts other than to note that some software packages allow for quick, real-time assessments. Such feedback is essential to fine-tuning personalized learning programs

and ensuring student engagement and academic success. Therefore, it is less clear how teachers and students will receive feedback to help them determine a student's mastery toward particular college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements or how to structure the student's personalized curriculum in order to meet his or her needs.

In the Sample Learning Experience example, students are exposed to orientation to their new portals and receive additional instruction regarding tablet basics, cyberbullying, and school-sponsored links to online textbooks. Parents can also receive training, including dual-language training.

Middle school counseling, college visits, and exposure to college and career pathways will help students to gain an understanding of their efforts' link to their college and career goals, and will support their high school coursework planning. Further, the district will support students, especially high-need students, through counseling to help them identify academic interests and set course for their college or career goals.

The applicant does not provide all of the elements of a high-quality plan, such as specific timetables, responsible parties, and links to specific goals. Such evidence would give a strong sense of how the various elements of the plan work together, as well as the interdependencies among various tasks and teams.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides moderate evidence of a high -quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready, including an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements.

The Effective Learning/Effective Teaching Pyramid provides a succinct but powerful summary of the key elements of the proposed project; along with the Logic Model, these exhibits show the deep theoretical constructs of the proposed plan -- the importance of equipping and engaging students and teachers in technology-aided personalized lessons; exploring new ways of learning and teaching; and conducting ongoing assessments and evaluations to fine-tune the models in real-time. The E4 School Implementation Timeline (Table 3.1) provides a good overview of the activities to implement the high-quality plan.

The district will reorganize its Central Office to add an Office of Innovation to provide principals with training, orientation, and implementation assistance. It is unclear, however, how this office's work will differ from existing professional development and innovation training. Trainers will receive training in lessons, streaming content, and online tools, including interactive digital textbooks that pose relevant, real-world problems to students.

Teachers will have practical, dynamic, and actionable information on which to base personalized learning plans. Teachers will create and utilize formative assessments that allow them to adjust learning plans per individual student needs.

Further, student achievement will be included within overall evaluations of teachers and principals; and the state evaluation system has been designed to provide actionable feedback to teachers.

An excellent element of the plan is the placement of school-based Instructional coaches and Technology Specialists to provide on-site support to teachers as they implement the new personalized learning curriculum. The Technology Specialists, especially, play an integral role in the implementation through their support of digital learning environments, professional development and program evaluation, and content knowledge and professional growth, among other critical functions.

As stated previously, New Mexico has developed robust new measures of teacher and principal effectiveness that take into account student growth, observations, and school community surveys. The system will provide insight into the relationship between school leader effectiveness, instructional practices, and student achievement. Further, mentors and peers will provide feedback as well, especially for beginning teachers.

The state has developed the New Mexico School Leadership Institute to provide professional develop training for principals, develop professional learning communities, and support evaluation implementation efforts. Teachers will receive four additional professional development days annually, and a Personalized Learning Summer Institute will offer lessons and demonstrations of new personalized learning strategies.

As a proposed middle school intervention, the proposed plan does not outline how the district will sustain momentum for students as they enter high school. Such momentum is critical to increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

The applicant seeks to increase the percentage of students served by highly effective teachers/principals to 10%, and those served by effective teachers/principals to 60%, which seems perhaps overly modest. With only 10% of students being served by highly effective teachers or principals, the question arises as to whether a different approach to professional development is needed, or whether the investment in the proposed plan will be cost-effective in terms of outcomes.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shows moderate evidence of a high-quality plan that demonstrates that the applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning .

The district will support schools utilization of flexible time structures, common prep time, and exploring challenging curriculum. Additionally, school calendars will be modified to include more instructional time with students and shorter, more focused professional development time.

The proposed Office of Innovation within the district's administration will play a critical role in supporting principals in their efforts to implement personalized learning plans and turn-around poorly-performing schools. With the support of the teachers' union, the New Mexico School Leadership Institute, and School Leadership teams, the district appears well-united in implementing the proposed vision.

The application, however, lacks sufficient support for students having the opportunity to progress in their coursework based on demonstrated mastery rather than "seat time;" further, it's unclear that students will have multiple opportunities or ways in which to demonstrate mastery. The applicant notes that a virtual high school is available for students seeking alternative learning styles, but does not mention similar alternative pathways to mastering coursework for middle school students. The application does not include information regarding learning resources that are available to students with disabilities and English Language learners.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shows strong evidence of a high-quality plan in which the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources, as well as information technology systems, to develop and monitor personalized learning environments.

The applicant offers a detailed sample plan that appears sound, comprehensive, and mindful of equity of access issues. As previously stated, the interoperable AIMS data system integrates data from a variety of databases into an interface that educators, parents, students, and counselors can access to monitor student performance. Working with site-based user teams, including Technology Specialists, the applicant will customize data at a school level and provide training and support to teachers in accessing and utilizing the data. It is not clear, however, whether the data can be exported in an open data format.

The various options to ensure inclusive participation in the digital initiative are likely to ensure high family buy-in and support, critical elements to the success of any school initiative. Students and families will have access to numerous technological devices at school, and they may borrow devices from school libraries or utilize computers at public libraries. The local internet provider will offer discounted internet service at \$10 per month, and the District is exploring creating digital "hot spots" within the community.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant shows moderate evidence of 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</p> <p>The applicant has a high-quality plan to evaluate 11 measures of implementation success through the analysis of instructional practices; teacher efficacy; professional learning supports, parent and student survey feedback on engagement, college awareness supports, instructional technology and personalized learning; principal feedback on teacher evaluation tools; and feedback on District Leadership, the Office of Innovation, and the program office implementation. The metrics will be evaluated frequently by the Implementation Team to examine progress toward milestones and make adjustments as needed.</p> <p>The proposed outcome measures show good ideas of how to measure the effectiveness of certain program elements, but they are quite vague and high-level and as such are difficult to evaluate. For example, "To what extent has the program improved student outcomes" would benefit from additional detail regarding what student outcome measures would be utilized.</p> <p>Additionally, the measures need to be actionable; measuring how much the 8th to 9th grade transition has been strengthened is helpful, but it would be a stronger measure if it were more specific and tied to concrete items that the team could revise throughout the course of the project.</p> <p>The evaluation data will be shared with the Implementation Team, but it is unclear how it will share its data publicly.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides strong evidence of a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>The applicant's Table 5.2 offers a high-quality plan that shows the frequency of ongoing communication with 11 sets of internal and external stakeholders, including the Advisory Council, teachers, site teams, and the general public. An excellent feature of the communication is its two-way nature; teachers will be asked often for input, feedback, and their professional needs. Additionally, the variety of stakeholders engaging in communication suggests that many different constituencies will hold the Implementation Team accountable for progress toward the project goals. Further, the many stakeholders can communicate within their diverse communities/organizations and further encourage interest and support in the success of this project.</p> <p>Lastly, the mixture of communication vehicles, from various public meetings to surveys to traditional media to electronic media, suggests that the applicant has a strong vision for the dissemination of communications with stakeholders and the public.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides moderate evidence of ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures.</p> <p>The rationale for the proposed measures appears reasonable, as it is both aligned with LEA overall goals, such as lowering achievement gaps for underserved groups, and with LEA areas of specific interest.</p> <p>The increase in percentages of 8<sup>th</sup> graders taking Algebra I seems modest, but reasonable given the low baselines;</p>		

similarly, proficiency rates for 7<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Learners in Science are low but reasonable.

The proposed grade-appropriate academic indicator measure of the number of AVID 8<sup>th</sup> graders taking Algebra I is impressive, as is the proposed social-emotional reductions in habitual truancy, especially among Native American students. The addition of a social-emotional indicator regarding perceptions of school safety also shows a good understanding of the importance of student environment to academic success.

The applicant seeks to increase the percentage of students served by highly effective teachers/principals to 10%, and those served by effective teachers/principals to 60%, which seems perhaps overly modest. As stated earlier, such low goalposts suggest that perhaps the proposed intervention is not sufficient or appropriate to best serve district students.

Further, more frequent tracking of data, beyond annual reporting, would be most helpful to the district team in order to fine-tune the program.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

**5**

**5**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides strong evidence of 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. Numerous evaluative instruments -- surveys, structured interviews, observation forms, among others -- will collect data from a variety of stakeholders regarding implementation success. Table 5.2 presents a comprehensive evaluation plan that includes implementation success in professional development; parent/family training; personalized, student-driven learning; high-need student supports; and collective impact.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides strong evidence of the applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and Tables. The thoughtful rationale includes a discussion of building on existing infrastructure and district investments, with a recognition of one-time costs to equip classrooms and students and establish various digital licenses. Recurring costs have been minimized to 6% of the total proposed budget, and 8% of the total projected program funds will come from operations and community partners.

Nearly half of the proposed budget (44%) will support teacher professional development, which suggests a significant and meaningful investment in providing teachers with the necessary tools to provide successful personalized learning environments. Over twenty six percent of the budget is allotted to technology, most of which are one-time costs to equip classrooms with materials including whiteboards, laptops, wireless devices, and tablets for teachers and students. With this significant investment in instructional technology, and another 14.5% allotted to student-centered activities, it's clear that the proposal's priorities rest with creating a significant but successful paradigm shift among its schools.

The 36% of the budget for personnel costs seems reasonable, given the intent to place Technology Specialists in each of 27 middle schools.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

**10**

**4**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides weak evidence of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

As previously stated, the budget assumes only 6% recurring costs. The budget assumes that, after high start-up costs, licensing and materials fees will be much lower over time, but does not provide evidence to support this assumption.

Further, although the district will offer local continuing education training to scale-up the program from 20-27 schools, it's unclear that teachers will have the significant level of professional development support necessary to implement such an ambitious program. It's also less clear how the infrastructure costs and professional development costs necessary to scale up at the final 7 schools will be funded.

For example, beyond the district's plans to fund future replacement costs and recurring costs associated with increased bandwidth and server needs, it's unclear what other sources of state government support and funding are available beyond the grant period.

It may be unrealistic to assume that no further costs will be required beyond the 6% articulated within the budget; further, it's unclear how those costs will be covered.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the lower range.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows moderate evidence of the integration of public and private resources to augment schools' resources by providing a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership to support the plan described in the Competitive Preference Priority.

The applicant's logic model emphasizes engagement with key stakeholders in order to provide students with a variety of supportive services to strengthen their academic achievement. The approach is sound and addresses many important aspects of student life outside the classroom. The proposed integration of public and private resources will provide students with culturally-relevant programming; safe schools; cradle to career supports; community health services, and parental engagement and support activities.

Those partnerships include working with parents through partners Parents University and Families United; Mission Graduate; the University of New Mexico's Center for Education and Policy Research; ABC Community Schools; the Safe Schools Ambassador Program; and the district's Language and Cultural Equity Department. However, the applicant does not provide clear evidence on how those various partnerships would be integrated and coordinated.

The applicant shows moderate evidence of describing how the partners would track indicators at the student and aggregate level, including those of children with challenges, and how they would use the data to develop a strategy to scale the model up and improve results over time. The measures included through the Center for Education Policy and Research (CEPR) are helpful but still rather vague in terms of their measurability. While some of the CEPR's measures are helpful in raising community awareness of a community-wide problem, such as truancy, they are not necessarily as effective in targeting resources to individual students.

Similarly, the applicant does not propose a decision-making process and infrastructure to evaluate individual student needs and propose and implement solutions for those needs, which would ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources.

Among the indicators to be assessed are Social/Emotional Measures tied to truancy and parental perceptions of school safety, which the district and its partners seek to address together. These are useful indicators for recognizing the overall environment and culture in which students are learning.

Therefore, this applicant scored in the medium range.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a strong overarching vision, as well as detailed, high-quality plans regarding key elements and

plan activities that show a strong community effort to develop, monitor, and revise personalized learning plans as appropriate. The applicant will offer all middle school students, regardless of background, 24/7 connectivity and technological tools for personalized learning plans. Teachers will have ample opportunities for professional development and ongoing support, and students and families will have significant training, including Parent University training for families.

Students will have numerous technological learning platforms to match their personal learning styles, and teachers will strengthen their skills as "facilitators" rather than providers of content. A well-developed evaluation system, and a strong plan for creating an interoperable data system that integrates data from a variety of databases into an interface that educators, parents, students, and counselor will ensure quality data to assess and improve support for academic growth.

The applicant's vision is research-based and a clear and credible approach to offering students, teachers, and administrator's the tools to develop personalized learning that is college- and career-ready. The applicant envisions a program of wraparound services, to strengthen student social and emotional supports to encourage high aspirations for all students.

Therefore, the applicant has met this priority.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>153</b>
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