



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0180MD-3 for Allegany County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The district supports the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments as well as the Maryland State Department of Education's development of the new Common Core State Curriculum. To this end, ACPS adopted the Maryland ELA Curricular Framework and Maryland Common Core State Curriculum for Mathematics. Independently, the applicant continues to develop the local K-12 curriculum with enhanced standards and rigorous assessments. In addition, ACPS supports the MSDE in the development of interdisciplinary STEM-based curriculum and creates a minimum of four STEMcentric lesson plans each year while supporting this with externships for selected middle and high school teachers. The district is deeply involved in teaching Mandarin Chinese at the elementary level as part of its World Language program to prepare students for a global world. A summer academy is part of the district's plan for language immersion and to provide a diverse learning environment. A robust early college and AP program, financed by the district, prepares students for the start of college and career.

(b) The applicant has developed its own Assessment Management System (AMS) housing benchmark data, the electronic curriculum and state and local testing data. They use ASPEN which has multiple uses and applications to provide information that enhances student learning and provides a P-20 warehouse of data. The infrastructure requested by this grant will make possible access to information regarding performance data, year-over-year comparisons and detailed information on each indicator for students, parents, educators, administrators and policymakers.

Teachers, administrators and central office staff have been trained in the use of ASPEN and with funding from RTTT-D will have an easy-to-use web portal that will allow:

1. Race to the Top management and performance for the purposes of making data available to researchers;
2. Standards, assessment and growth performance for teachers;
3. Access to the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS); and
4. Student performance data for the purpose of providing information on how students are performing and whether they are college and career ready.

c. Students have electronic tools to support learning and are provided with educational opportunities regardless of their abilities, backgrounds and learning styles. Students are in charge of their own learning in these personalized learning environments, allowing them to master content and develop 21st century learning skills.

Although this section is well-organized and informative it lacks information on the reform measures to be taken and a vision that will accelerate student growth through personalized instruction. The goals of this program appear to deal with providing access through a broadband fiber at seven schools and one support service, equipping labs in two middle schools, providing tablet devices for the 6th and 9th grades and enhancing language programs at an elementary school and the two high schools. This falls short of a coherent and comprehensive reform vision.

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

(a) ACPS has identified the participating schools based upon the following:

1. Providing broadband access to 7 schools and 1 support services building;

2. Equipping science labs at 2 city middle schools and 2 rural middle schools;
 3. Providing tablet devices to students in the 6th and 9th grades;
 4. Extending a countywide program for Chinese immersion in grades 2 through 5; and
 5. Piloting an AP Spanish class at one school while combining a French II/IV at another.
- (b) A list of schools participating in this grant program has been provided. All PK-12 schools are participating schools.
- (c) A total of 8,771 students and 650 teachers will participate. 55.85% have been identified as students from low income families. High need students total 1,234.

While the applicant says all district schools will participate in this program, it is clear from the data supplied that only certain grades and a small number students are involved in the two high school language programs. Likewise, the Chinese Immersion Program is limited to one elementary school. As a result, it is not clear how the entire student body will participate. It is important to know at what level the schools will participate. Having broadband access, while important, provides these schools with access to the internet. What is not clear is how this will be used within the personalized learning environment that is to be implemented. The same applies to tablets for the 6th and 9th grades.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Section (A) (3) does not provide a high-quality plan for the proposed activities. This should include at a minimum: **key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.** Instead of key goals, the applicant has listed the following **activities**:

1. Extending the BTOP funded fiber broadband to eight school buildings;
2. Providing a 1:1 initiative in equipping a cohort of sixth and ninth grade students with tablet devices for personalized learning which will impact students in all ACPS middle and high schools in four years;
3. Installing and upgrading the middle school science labs with science laboratory equipment;
4. Expanding the Chinese immersion program in one K-5 school in order to fulfill ACPS's goal of a K-5 continuous world language pipeline;
5. Providing a World Language Program for middle and high school Spanish and French to have a fully digital learning environment for authentic connections to world languages;
6. Expansion of Curriculum and Learning and taking advantage of the Common Core Standards and a PARCC-like local benchmark system where local assessments for measurement of student growth can be attained; and
7. Offering STEM externships for teachers to build on STEMcentric lesson plans used in daily instruction.

Certainly, every one of the foregoing activities will contribute to improving access to the internet or expanding curriculum. It is anticipated that these initiatives will be scaled up. How the Chinese Immersion or French and Spanish classes will be scaled up is not made clear in this section. The applicant states that the "initiatives will create greater accessibility to cutting-edge, customizable and one-to-one technology that will increase global connectivity, enhance student learning experiences and increase student achievement." Exactly how this will take place is not described. These statements need to be supported with what is actually planned. The expansion of tablets to middle schools and high schools by the end of the project period will provide access to students that they may not currently have. How they will be used in a personalized learning environment (e.g., e-portfolios, digital badges, etc.) has not been addressed. The content of this section is very brief and does not provide information regarding the meaningful reform to support district-wide change. A clear description of the key goals of the project has not been provided. If it is simply providing technology and an infrastructure and a few upgrades in language classes these key goals can be met. But the proposal focus needs to be moving toward meaningful reform. It is difficult to see how this approach meets that criteria.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. Summative assessments are provided for S/Y 2011-2012 and S/Y 2012-2013 on the Maryland State Assessment test (MSA). This is reported as percent proficient and advanced. The applicant states that growth is calculated in the 2013-14

school year primarily using locally developed pre and post tests. This is in error. Baseline data for grades 3-8 is based upon MSA Reading for S/Y 2011-12 and S/Y 2012-13 data. Grades 3-5 show a slight decline in proficient status. While grades 6 and 7 show a substantial increase. 8th grade reading has remained the same. MSA Math shows a decline in proficiency for grades 3-8. No goals have been set for S/Y 2013-14 through S/Y 2017-18.

2. The data supplied regarding the decrease in achievement gaps shows a significant decrease for most 3-8 students in MSA reading and math.

3. The graduation rate for all high schools in the district was 89.84% in S/Y 2012-13. At that time, Allegany High School and Mountain Ridge graduated 90% of their students. Fort Hill High School has remained at 84% for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. All high schools seek a target of 100% by S/Y 2017-18.

4. College enrollment rates for graduates during S/Y 2012-13 are 69% overall. This enrollment number declined during the second year of college to 47.2%. Graduates who made it through all four years of college totaled 52.8%. ACPS does not have a means for tracking post-secondary degree attainment. There are no goals set for college enrollment rates.

The data supplied proposes goals extending into S/Y 2017-18 only for graduation rates. No determination can be made as to whether goals for the categories are either ambitious or achievable based on the lack of data. This lack of goal-setting is a major problem for this section, since it is a criteria that must be met.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	4
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) The increase in student proficiency over time is for the most part positive and shows an improvement in student outcomes. The drop in some MSA test scores is attributed to the transition to common core which is not taken into consideration by the MSA. There are some impressive results here. For instance, Grade 3 was listed at 61.4% proficient in MSA Mathematics in 2003. By 2013, this proficiency for the same grade level was calculated at 82.1%. In MSA Reading 6th grade students scored 65.4% proficient but the same grade level was rated at 85.5% in 2013.</p> <p>(b) The district does not have any lowest-achieving or lowest-performing schools. However, ACPS does provide assistance to schools that do not attain annual yearly progress measures for any subgroup.</p> <p>(c) Student performance data is made available to parents (1) in an annual publication posted on the ACPS website, (2) by providing parents with a student assessment letter and (3) through the Parent Advisory Committees. While this information is helpful, it lacks information regarding how this information would inform or improve participation, instruction and services. It is not clear how often the student assessment letter is sent out and how frequent the communication between parents and the school occurs.</p> <p>The criteria for this section requires the applicant to provide data covering the past four years. The applicant has not done this. Instead, they have offered S/Ys 2003, 2004, 2010 and 2013.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school level instructional and support staff, based on the US Census Bureau's classification using the F-33 survey of local government finances amounted to a total of \$45,859,385; [Detailed information can be found at http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/f33agency.asp.]</p> <p>(b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only totals \$40,232,843;</p> <p>(c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only totals \$35,133,342; and</p> <p>(d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level totaled \$5,226,039.</p> <p>The entire operating budget is posted to be a ACPS website: http://www.acpsmd.org. This provides a moderate degree of transparency. In addition, the contracts of all employees are posted on the ACPS website and each contains the salary scale for that group of employees. Top level administrators salaries are posted in local newspapers. For a more in depth</p>		

view of the budget and what it means to individual schools, individuals would have to have web access. This is not always possible in rural areas where some of the district's schools are located.

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

10

1

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

No state legal statutory and regulatory requirements are offered that deal with implementing the personalized learning environments. The applicant does describe itself as an Equal Educational Opportunity Employer and adheres to the Americans with Disability Act and the Disabilities Education Act. It assures the reviewer that students will be treated equitably and fairly. Information is lacking regarding the actual statutory authority granted to ACPS by the Maryland State Department of Education or the State Legislature. Although they say: "ACPS's regulatory requirements support and provide for successful implementation of the personalized learning environment," no evidence of those regulatory requirements supports this statement. They have not described the successful conditions that would allow them to implement a personalized learning environment.

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

15

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B) (4) (a) This section requires a description of how stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal and (if applicable) how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. This is not addressed. While the applicant says that a collaborative process ensures that all stakeholders have the opportunity for input and feedback, meaningful stakeholder support and engagement for this grant is not described. From the statement that "ACPS has involved teachers, students, parents, higher education and other stakeholders of the intention of increasing a personalized learning environment for the students of ACPS," it appears that they may have been informed of but did not participate in the development of the proposal.

(B) (4) (i) The proposal has received a letter of support from the Allegany County Teacher's Association. No evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers or principals in the participating schools have been included in this section.

(B) (4) (b) A limited number of letters of support have been submitted in support of the proposal. These letters have been received from the Chief Performance Office of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Mayor of Cumberland, Maryland, a United States Senator, the Chief Technology Officer of the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce's Education Chair. There are no other letters of support.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	3

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C) (1) (a) Learning

This section requires a high-quality plan and refers the reader to Appendix B which provides little information relating directly to the learner. The activities and rationale for this program have been mentioned earlier in (A) (3) and include:

1. Extending the BTOP funded fiber broadband to eight school buildings;

2. Providing a 1:1 initiative in equipping a cohort of sixth and ninth grade students with tablet devices for personalized learning which will impact students in all ACPS middle and high schools in four years;
3. Installing and upgrading the middle school science labs with science laboratory equipment;
4. Expanding the Chinese immersion program in one K-5 school in order to fulfill ACPS's goal of a K-5 continuous world language pipeline;
5. Providing a World Language Program for middle and high school Spanish and French to have a fully digital learning environment for authentic connections to world languages;
6. Expansion of Curriculum and Learning and taking advantage of the Common Core Standards and a PARCC-like local benchmark system where local assessments for measurement of student growth can be attained; and
7. Offering STEM externships for teachers to build on STEMcentric lesson plans used in daily instruction.

This section does not have a high-quality program that provides key goals, a timeline, the deliverables and the parties responsible for implementing these activities. All comments are made in a general and vague way. It does not address (i) through (v) which focuses on the student outcomes of the program.

(C) (1) (a) can be summed up by saying that the district will provide an infrastructure to all teachers and students so they can connect to the internet. This does not address the criteria for this section of (C).

(C) (1) (b)

The applicant has not identified the student's access to:

1. A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development.
2. A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;
3. The high-quality content; and
4. Ongoing and regular feedback on student progress.

This information is handled in a very general way and lacks the depth necessary to understand the applicant's approach to providing personalized learning. It states that: "ACPS is working diligently to create a long-range plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all ACPS students the support to graduate college and career ready." The lack of a plan, whether it be long or short range, is a major problem with this section.

(C) (1) (c)

This section does not show how it will identify and address high-need learners outside of referring to making text accessible through written and digital format. The Assessment Management System is valuable to maintain individual student data; its use within the classroom as an enhancement to teaching and learning is not defined. The extremely general nature of the narrative does not provide a picture of the comprehensive activities that will be undertaken to assure students have access to and are provided with a personalized learning environment.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C) (2) (a)

The response lists a series of professional development offerings that are part of its annual plan. The workshops, academies that focus on effective teaching, instructional leadership, curriculum planning and design and instructional coaching would be very useful. However, the presentation is very incomplete. We do not see the full blueprint (high-quality plan) that would lead us to an understanding of what will actually take place should this proposal be funded. Little mention is made of improving instruction through the evaluation system or for measuring student progress. It would be helpful to see this covered in the response as well as the place that Professional Learning Communities play.

C) (2) (b)

The district has identified a technology leader in every participating school that can troubleshoot technology problems and two full-time Infusion Technology Specialists that provide support for teachers in their classroom. Although they indicate

that they have ambitious goals for increases in local student performance data, the response stops there. A single sentence states that the district has taken a very active role in providing all instructional staff on-going professional development in the technology field. What direction that role takes has not been addressed. This section needs to identify the high-quality resources they will use, the learning approaches they intend to use to respond to student needs and the tools that provide continuous feedback regarding the state of student progress. As it stands, the response is vague.

(C) (2) (c)

The applicant has not addressed this section's demand for information regarding the school leadership team's training, policies, tools, data and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment. The district has responded instead to the technology available in the classroom (e.g. SMART Boards, Tablets and Student Response Systems) with special emphasis on the Chinese immersion program. This falls short of providing an in depth and comprehensive response.

(C) (2) (d)

98.2% of the teachers in the district are designated as highly qualified by the Maryland State Department of Education. Teachers assigned to classes that are out of their content area are encouraged to take the Praxis exam to add this endorsement to their teaching certificate. It is not entirely clear why the district does not seek 100% of their classes taught by highly qualified teachers. The applicant notes that "In some cases, the teachers are encouraged and sometimes required to take and pass the Praxis exam and add the endorsement to their teaching certificate." The wording of this statements seems to suggest that the district accepts teachers that are unqualified to teach a particular subject. It would be of value to know what conditions would exist that would not require a teacher to pass the Praxis exam.

Section (C) (2) requires a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The narrative does not provide this. What we have in its place are general and very vague statements. The brevity of the responses in this section is a serious problem for clearly describing what the district will do. In (C) (2) (b) the narrative states that "the district has ambitious goals for increases in local student performance data." Yet, the narrative does not provide information about what these ambitious goals are and what high-quality learning resources will meet these goals. Part (c) of this section requires information pertaining to the training, policies, tools, data and resources that enable both school leaders and school leadership teams to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks. This has not been addressed in a meaningful way to show that an actual learning environment will result from their actions.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) This response is limited to noting that there is a Central Office and it is staffed. It does not provide information that would indicate how this grant would be managed to facilitate personalized learning. The district level leadership team has not been identified. The key individuals at the central office level will play a major role in the implementation of the proposal. They are described as leaders, but not what that leadership would entail.

(b) The school leadership teams are identified and have sufficient authority over multiple factors that would affect the implementation of the project (e.g., schedules, calendars, personnel, staffing, roles and responsibilities of faculty and support staff and budgets).

(c) Mastery of the subject matter rather than seat time is the standard for ACPS students. The applicant provides teachers with the ability to use their discretion to allow students to retake tests, apply alternative assessments to demonstrate mastery of content and resubmit assignments.

(d) The applicant indicates that students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content at multiple times in a variety of ways. Just what those multiple opportunities and variety of ways consist of is not spelled out satisfactorily.

(e) The district makes accommodations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Just what these accommodations consist of is not described in any detail.

Only (b) provides enough information to comply with (D) (1) the districts policies, practices and rules. Large gaps of

information are left out of these responses, making it often difficult to assess what the applicant wishes to convey in the way of a plan for this project.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) ACPS does not show that parents have access to the tools (e.g. computers, laptops, and tablets) in this section. However, the proposal narrative has indicated that the district will provide computer labs and services in their buildings in off-hours. The proposal provides examples of how teachers and students will receive technology to address the personalized learning environment.

(b) Support is provided to students, teachers and parents through the technology teacher in each school. Teachers receive support from the Tech Infusion teachers who model lessons and use a co-teaching platform to assist students in the use of new applications.

(c) This section is confined to describing the use of Blogs and Wikis as a means for student expression. It makes no mention of such things as electronic tutors or secure software to store personal records. It does indicate that student documents may be stored on the school's server. Since these are personal documents, some indication should be present that indicates that records/documents can be securely stored. The narrative does not fully describe how data can be exported in an open data format.

(d) The district uses an interoperable data system that includes human resource data, student information data and an instructional improvement system data.

The applicant stops short in this section of providing a complete and comprehensive understanding of how it supports personalized learning. This response must include information to show how it is being implemented and how parents get access to the internet in their home. Within the application, two of the middle schools are described as being located in rural areas. Parent access to the internet may be difficult to find in these areas.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section requires a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. Missing from this section are the key goals, activities to be undertaken, a rationale for the activities, a timeline, the deliverables and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

What we do know from this section is that:

1. Teachers and principals are assessed on their daily use of technology in the classroom. What the criteria is for this assessment is not revealed. It is to be archived, but no mention is made of how it will be used to assist instruction.
2. Student local assessments are being tracked online using a pre and post benchmark system in the Assessment Management System.
3. State data is provided on the student assessments which are then aggregated by teacher and school to inform advancements or areas of needed assistance where student growth is measured.
4. Technology tools are integrated into learning.

This section requires a high-quality plan. In addition, the information provided does not indicate how ACPS will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of its investments.

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

ACPS does not present a plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. It does point to monthly meetings of the Board of Education, Parent Advisory Committee and Teacher Roundtable as well as media outlets, the ACPS website and TV and radio stations. This list of events and other sources of information is of value in keeping up communication within the school community. The Appendix provides policy memos and a plan for providing

Public Information and Communication. This has more to do with such things as contacting the news media or other organizations, emergency situations or the submission of written statements for publication.

The lack of a high-quality plan is problematic here. It is important to see that the lines of communication are **two-way** and not just **top down**. The information in Section (E) (2) is very brief and provides little information regarding a plan.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(a)–(b) The applicant has chosen a number of performance measures that include:

- K-8 Reading, Mathematics and Science Benchmark Assessments.
- Maryland Model for School Readiness.
- Fitness Report Card.
- High School Assessments (English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology and Government).

With the exception of the Fitness Report Card (assessing student health), these measures provide a means of determining if the student is in need of intervention or whether instruction needs to be modified.

(c) ACPS benchmark measures are developed locally and reviewed annually to insure they are rigorous. It would be helpful to the reader to provide information regarding the review and what steps will be taken to improve the measure.

This section provides the the following Performance Measures:

1. Performance Measure (Grades 4-8-a) MSA Mathematics
2. Performance Measure (Grades 9-12-a) The FAFSA form is completed on line by interested students. ACPS does not maintain a record for this.
3. Performance Measure (Grades PK-3-a, b) Reading and Math
4. Performance Measure (Grades 4-8-b,c) Reading and Math
5. Performance Measure (Grades 4-8, Fitness Report Card)
6. Performance Measure (Grade 5-Science)
7. Performance Measure (Grade 8-Science)
8. Performance Measure (Grades 9-12-b) Algebra, English, Biology
9. Performance Measure (Grades 9-12-c) Career Readiness
10. Performance Measure (Grades 9-12-d,e) Algebra, English, Biology and Government and Graduation Rate

No target information has been made available for S/Y 2013 through 2017. As with other sections, the lack of information makes it difficult to assess this section. Ambitious or achievable targets are impossible to determine without actually selecting a target.

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

The applicant has in operation a means to use technology to improve instruction. Information is gathered regarding student performance and growth as well as to measure teacher and principal effectiveness. In the area of professional development activities, both teachers and principals receive ongoing training on the development of Student Learning Objectives (locally developed) and the review of data and baseline evidence. In addition, state data is used to assess students for data based decision-making. Teachers and principals have received professional development on integrating STEM into the classroom.

Mentioned in this section is the use of a “walkthrough template.” It would be helpful to understand what the template consists of and how it is used to determine if there is a focus on high expectations for students.

This is not a high-quality plan that would rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTT-D activities. Some of these are one time items (e.g. creation of science labs and a districtwide infrastructure) that are over once they are up and running. But for the ongoing activities, like the World Language Program or Chinese immersion, the applicant has not provided any rigorous evaluation plan to determine their future effectiveness.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is a very complete budget. It clearly describes each of the key activities using a high-quality plan template and provides information regarding these activities, a rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables and responsible parties. A four year budget summary is provided and then broken into detail to explain the purchases to be made under the grant. No funds other than RTTT-D are listed. The project level itemized costs appear both necessary to the project and are reasonable costs associated with its implementation. For example, the personnel category is limited to the expansion of the Chinese language program (4 total teachers) spread over the four years of the grant.</p> <p>The narrative provides one time investments vs. those that are used for ongoing operational costs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fiber Broadband Extension--One-time investment. 2. Middle School Labs-One-time investment. 3. One to one Initiative for High Schools and Middle Schools--Yearly investment for grades 6-8 and 9-12 (to be sustained in the future through local funds. 4. Chinese Immersion Program--Yearly investment for grades 2-5 for four years and then sustained via local technology equipment funds. 5. World Language Program--Yearly investment for grades 11-12 for four years of the grant and then sustained via local technology replacement equipment and software funds. 6. Curriculum and Learning/PARCC-like Benchmark Assessments for Student Growth--One time cost using contract services. 7. STEM Externships--This is an ongoing investment. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As noted in (F) (1), the applicant provides a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the projects on going activities. Some of the activities of the project are one time investment (e.g., Fiber Broadband Extension and Middle School Science Labs) that, once they are completed, will be supported fully through local funds. In each of the other ongoing investments like the One-to-One initiative, Chinese Immersion Program or World Language Program, the district expects to be able to fund these through local funds. Only the Externships do not provide information as to future stipends for this activity. The budget provides \$86,400 per year for 12 Externships. Since the narrative considers this important to the program, it would be helpful to know if the plans call for continuing these in the future.</p> <p>From all of the information presented in this section, the applicant appears to place great emphasis on local funding to close any gaps. However, there is political support from the Mayor of Cumberland, a US Senator, the Maryland State Department of Education and the Chamber of Commerce. These letters of support do not promise financial aid, but these individuals may be of use in the future to acquire additional funds from their respective organizations. This section lacks a plan depicting how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget. A budget extending three years after the term of the grant has not been presented.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application has provided evidence of community partnerships in each of the 7 key activities of the program. These include those formed with the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, Allegany County Library Association, Allegany County Building Trades Foundation, Hanban Institute, Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, Garrett County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education.</p>		

While the organizations mentioned above are important resources for the applicant's project that include public and private organizations, there is little in their response to indicate that they provide additional student and family supports addressing the social, emotional or behavioral needs of the participating students. The response neglects high-need students. This section is especially weak in not providing ten population-level desired results for students and omitting how the partnership would:

- Provide Information to track the selected indicators that measure each result.
- Use data to target its resources.
- Improve results over time.
- Identify annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures.

This section gives the appearance of having left out a good part of the information required by the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has provided 7 activities for this project. Each of these (Fiber Broadband Extension, Middle School Science Labs, 1:1 Initiative for middle and high schools, Chinese immersion program, World Language Program, development of PARCC-like benchmark assessments and STEM Externships) are designed to provide access to learning environments that is not currently possible. These activities may positively affect the district's ability to assess student progress and tailor their education to their needs in the preparation for college- career-ready graduation. In parts of this proposal, its ability to provide the reader with clear description of how it will actualize this to provide all students with the necessary support to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning is not clear. Certainly, both the Chinese immersion program and the Word Language Program can provide access to learning experiences that are currently not available to them. The middle school science labs too will be advantageous as well as extending the access to the internet at the remaining schools in the system. The assessment piece (PARCC-like assessments) will be helpful in determining the needs of both teachers and students. It can be a means of evaluating teacher/principal success and the need to redesign teaching to reach all students. The STEM Externships, although affecting a small number of teachers, can be a valuable tool to broaden the teacher's experience in areas that will lead to enhancing their lesson plans.</p> <p>One of the problems presented by this proposal is the lack of information provided by the applicant. For instance, the key goals for this program should surround the creation of a personalized learning environment for students and teachers. In its place are activities (mentioned above). While some of these activities may contribute to personalizing education and raising student achievement, no clear evidence or high-quality plan informs this. Little evidence has been offered that the proposal will accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, meet the needs of students (especially high-needs students), or prepare students for graduation, college and/or career. The proposal lacks depth. The vision seems sidetracked by concentrating on things, (infrastructure, tablets, labs), when attention should be focused on personalizing student and teacher environments.</p>		

Total	210	70
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0180MD-2 for Allegany County Public Schools



A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is completely aligned with the Maryland Race to the Top initiative and the application sets forth a plan to build on the reforms in motion. The applicant thoroughly addresses the core educational assurances. The reform vision is coherent and comprehensive and earns a high score.

- The district is actively participating in the development of the Common Core State Curriculum and the expansion of the Online Instructional Toolkit of digital resources. Numerous initiatives add content to the state framework of standards and assessments.
- The district developed its own Assessment Management System and other data tools to track student performance, discipline, high school assessments, service learning and an array of other information to create profiles of students' needs and provide a basis for instructional decisions. It is in the process of integrating many applications into one student information system that will support even more integrated data such as teacher and principal evaluations, student health, special education and food and nutrition services. The goal is an easy-to-use web portal for a wide range of purposes.
- The district is poised to implement a new teacher/principal evaluation system and the application explains the process for providing professional development to teachers rated below Effective.
- The district does not have a school designated as a low-performing or low-achieving school.

The application includes a clear description of how the reforms and activities will achieve the goals for student learning and increased equity. Reforms include continued adoption of Common Core State Standards and assessment, incorporating student growth into teacher and principal evaluations, coordinating academic and other supports for under-achieving students and using data systems to accelerate learning and increase equity for all students.

The application describes the classroom experience where students interact with cross-disciplinary content, collaborate with interactive applications and equipment and connect with individuals around the world. The district proposes a classroom that supports high standards for all learners and provides supports for individuals learners who need them.

The proposal is quite detailed in describing the initiatives that have been implemented over the past couple of years, especially those in partnership with the State. The proposal is clearly aligned with previous efforts; it is heavy on infrastructure (fiber optic connectivity), equipment, digital devices and software purchases.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's approach to implementation focuses on ensuring broadband access at all school buildings in the district. Without this foundational utility, digital devices, tools and resources cannot be deployed to create personalized learning environments for all students in all schools. The provision of fiber optic broadband connectivity is the basis for the score in the high range.

The applicant provides some rationale for the process of selecting all the schools in the district. One project, a personalized digital world language program, is to be implemented at a high school based on the teachers' interest in the program. The proposal fills gaps in the district's work to have all broadband connectivity in all schools and to provide, over time, 1:1 digital devices for students beginning in the 6th grade. Other projects will impact all students over time.

A list of all participating schools is included in the application. Numbers of participating educators, numbers of students, numbers of high-need students, numbers of low-income students and accompanying percentages are provided.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The reforms are designed to support district-wide change as the broadband initiative, science labs, curriculum and learning strategies will impact the entire district. Other proposed initiatives are designed to scale up over the life of the grant. The high-quality plan for LEA-wide reform is not described in this section, but it is found in the Sustainability section (F)(2). There, the applicant provides their plan to scale up projects over the life of the grant to impact all students, teachers and schools. Fiber connectivity will be provided to two school buildings per year of the grant. Middle school science labs will be installed in four schools over four years. Digital devices will be provided to 6th and 9th graders each year of the grant. The Chinese Immersion program will be expanded by one grade level each year of the grant. Advanced Placement Spanish digital textbooks will be piloted at one high school with a plan for recommendation to expand to all high schools. Middle and high school teachers will participate in STEM externships each year of the grant.

The plan to connect all schools with fiber optic broadband connectivity is the basis for the applicant's ability to reach its outcome goals.

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

Baseline data is included in the application. The application did not include targets for performance on summative assessments or decreasing achievement gaps. The applicant did include targets for increasing the graduation rate to 100% for all students but did not include targets for subgroups. Baseline data is included for college enrollment rates. No targets were included in the application. The criteria is weakly addressed.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant chose not to include data for the past four years. Instead the applicant provided data from 2003, 2010, 2012 and 2013. Impressive gains in grades 3-8 reading and math were achieved over that 9-10 year period. No high school comparison data was provided. Information provided is insufficient to determine whether the applicant has had success in closing achievement gaps, raising graduation rates or increasing college enrollment rates. Sub group data is not provided.

The district does not have persistently low-performing schools.

The applicant describes a web publication available to parents interested in student performance data. Parents receive a letter with individual student assessment data. Parent Advisory Committees, housed at schools, host parent information meetings throughout the year. Participation by parents in these meetings was not discussed.

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

The applicant makes the school district budget available to the public on its website. Employee contracts are also posted on the website and include the salary **scale** for groups of employees. The application included dollar amount totals for actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff, teachers and non-personnel expenditures. The criteria did not ask for dollar amounts, but rather to address if actual salaries and expenditures are available to the public.

The applicant states that actual personnel salaries for instructional staff, teachers and for non-personnel expenditures are accessible as required by law through the district Public Information Office. Higher levels of transparency would be achieved by making school level financial information available at the school level.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant explains in this section that the regulations of the county Board of Education and the district itself support the implementation of personalized learning environments. The applicant does not address any State legal, statutory or regulatory requirements. The discussion of the district's work alongside the State's Race to the Top initiatives may lead to the conclusion that the district has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the proposal, although no evidence to support that conclusion is provided.

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

15

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Based on the letters of support for the proposal, stakeholders in participating schools were informed about the need for fiber optic connectivity for the 8 schools. One news article featured the Chinese Partial Immersion Program proposed for expansion. It is not clear what information was shared with stakeholders during the development of the proposal or how any input contributed to any revisions of the proposal. There is a letter of support from the local teachers' association for the broadband initiative that also mentions support for instructional technology.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses this criteria by explaining how the goal of broadband access at all schools in the district is the foundation for using digital resources to personalize the learning environment for all students. The district will use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to create and implement flexible learning plans for both students and teachers. Learning, and student engagement in their own learning, is at the heart of the plan that includes student achievement-centered professional development as well as supportive technologies and support for the use of technology.

When implemented, the plan will build on the systems and reforms already in place that are designed to develop college/career ready students. Accommodations for high-need students are in place.

The discussion of Learning in this section touches on the key components outlined in the criteria but provides little detail on how students will connect their learning to their future success, or how students will make sense of the vast amounts of resources, or where global learning experiences will take place, or what activities will develop their characteristics and traits such as teamwork and perseverance.

Missing are elements of a high-quality plan that would provide more clarity. The goal to install broadband access to all schools is clear. The use of (UDL) is also clear. How the other projects fit into a **high-quality plan to personalize the learning environment** for all students is not explained and the discussion of teaching and leading does not strongly meet the criteria.

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

20

9

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section restates what teachers are doing, rather than present a high quality plan for improvement. Overall, it is a minimal response to the criteria.

In this section, and more thoroughly in the vision section, the applicant describes its existing approach to engaging educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to implement personalized learning environments for all students. Opportunities for professional development are mentioned: professional development includes instructional strategies as well as the use of student data and teacher effectiveness data and feedback.

The district has made significant progress towards an integrated data system that is tied to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System and will be a robust system for educators to use to personalize learning, improve instruction, provide access to resources and meet individual students' needs.

The district has a goal that 99% of teachers will be highly qualified and certified in the content area they are teaching. Currently, 98.8% of teachers are highly qualified. The applicant does not use the terms Highly Effective or Effective in this section.

Details that would provide evidence of a high quality plan, such as goals, rationale for activities, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible are not included in this section, leading to a mid-range score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district office is organized in district level leadership teams that provide support to all schools in the district.</p> <p>School leadership teams are in place in all schools and have the autonomy to create school schedules and school calendars. Principals have the autonomy of assigning faculty roles and responsibilities and are responsible for the school-level budget.</p> <p>The applicant provided copies of district policies and rules that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery, give students multiple times and ways to demonstrate mastery and require instructional and assessment accommodations and modifications for students who need them.</p> <p>The policies and rules, coupled with the school and central office organization, earn the application a score in the high range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that teachers provide both students and parents with course content and with various tools and resources to bolster student success.</p> <p>Each school employs a technology infusion leader to assist teachers with instructional plans and instructional delivery. The tech infusion teachers are tasked with assisting students in the use of new applications.</p> <p>The use of technology systems that export information for use in other electronic learning systems is not described. What is described is the use of Blogs and Wikis for expression of student views.</p> <p>Schools use interoperable data systems that include human resource data, student information data and instructional improvement system data.</p> <p>It is not clear how much or how well these resources are utilized by parents, students or teachers. The infrastructure to support personalized learning is in place.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes its current status in assessing daily use of technology. The impact of using tablets to increase reading engagement is discussed.</p> <p>The applicant did not include a plan or current status for continuous evaluation of the entire proposal which would include the use and impact of broadband connectivity, the impact of expanding the Chinese Partial Immersion Program, the impact of middle school science labs, the plan to evaluate 1:1 devices for middle and high school students, the impact of the World Language Program, the use of student growth data and PARCC-like assessment or the plan to assess the investment in STEM externships.</p>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes its current status in sharing information with the public. At the current time, information is shared at Board of Education meetings, at Parent Advisory Committee meetings, at a monthly Teacher Roundtable and via media outlets. A high-quality plan to increase levels of communication and especially public engagement with internal and external stakeholders is not included in the application.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Performance Measures addressing Effective and Highly Effective teachers and principals are not included in the application.</p> <p>Performance Measures for K-8 reading, math and science were chosen and a rationale was provided. No targets for the duration of the grant were including in the application.</p> <p>The applicant included the Performance Measure to increase FAFSA completion and submission but noted the district does not track student FAFSA applications.</p> <p>The applicant chose the Maryland Model for School Readiness to inform teacher decisions on early childhood curriculum and assessments. No targets were provided.</p> <p>The applicant proposed reading and math Performance Measures for grades 4-8, as well a Fitness Performance Measure., each with a rationale. No targets were provided.</p> <p>The applicant proposed college/career readiness Performance Measures using Algebra, English, Biology and Government course assessments. No targets were provided.</p> <p>The applicant proposed the Fitness Report Card as a Performance Measure for grades 9-12. No targets were provided.</p> <p>The applicant proposed graduation rates as a Performance Measure. No targets were provided.</p> <p>Thirteen Performance Measures were included in the application. Because no targets were provided, there is insufficient evidence to assess how the applicant will measure progress towards achieving success over the course of the grant.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has in place a system to evaluate the use of technology in classrooms. Also in place is the district's Assessment Management System used to develop Student Learning Objectives and track progress to goals and improve instructional practices. Walkthrough evaluations are in place for trained principals and supervisors to record observations of classroom activities and student-teacher interactions. Ongoing training for teachers and principals is provided to improve the integration of technology and STEM content.</p> <p>As in other sections, the applicant describes what is in place, rather than a high quality approach to improve the plan.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant requests \$14,416,884 in Race to the Top funds to implement its reform proposal.</p> <p>The budget narrative includes a high-quality plan for implementation of each of the projects included in the proposed plan. Project-level summaries and Project-level itemized costs are described. The overall budget and the project-level budgets are reasonable and sufficient to support implementation. The applicant identified funds that are a one-time investment - the fiber broadband connections, the middle school science lab equipment and curriculum and assessment for student</p>		

growth. The applicant identifies funds that will require local technology replacement equipment funds after the grant period - 1:1 initiative, the Chinese Immersion Program, the World Language Program. It identifies STEM Externships as a program that will require securing new funds in order to continue the program.

The budget does not include funding from any sources beyond the Race to the Top - District competition.

Overall, the budget supports the initiatives described in the proposal and includes a rationale for each expenditure within each project. The applicant adequately addresses and meets the criteria. The score is in the high-middle range.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to sustain most of the investments with local funding appropriated for refreshment of equipment, technology equipment funds and software funds. The fiber broadband installation is a one-time cost. The middle school labs are a one-time investment with local funds planned to refresh obsolete equipment. The 1:1 initiative will be sustained with local technology equipment funds. The Chinese Immersion Program will be sustained with local technology equipment funds. The World Language Programs will be sustained with local technology equipment funds. Assessment for student growth will be completed in four years and no further investments are required. To continue STEM externships, funding will be solicited from business and industry.

The sustainability plan does not include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. The applicant's approach to sustainability does not identify specific sources of possible post-grant support. The applicant did not include an estimated budget for any number of years past the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has partnerships in place that support each of the projects included in the proposal. These partnerships are supportive of the individual initiatives, but do not meet the intent or requirements for the Competitive Preference Priority. These are partnerships that should be expected for the delivery of specific projects and support the implementation of one program or another. For example, the Chinese Immersion Program has a partnership with the Hanban Institute to provide opportunities for children to interact with native Chinese speakers. Another example is a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to help engage local business in providing STEM Externships. No doubt these are valuable, but have little to do with augmenting the schools' resources by providing additional student and family support to address the social, emotional or behavioral needs of the participating students.

Population-level desired results are not identified.

There are no measures to track.

There are no performance measures.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The intent of the proposal is aligned with the intent of the grant competition -- the applicant seeks to increase and enhance opportunities for personalized learning and to build on the district's and the state's efforts in the core educational assurance areas. Common Core standards have been adopted, a robust student information system is in place, professional development is described and, while no schools in the district are designated as low-performing, attention is given to schools that are low performing in comparison with other schools in the district. The proposal describes plans to use

Common Core and other assessment to prepare students for college and careers and to use data systems to more closely track student progress and close the achievement gaps. The application describes how student growth will be incorporated into teacher and principal evaluations and how academic and student support resources will be applied to accelerate progress for students in lower-performing schools.

Total	210	108
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0180MD-4 for Allegany County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of meeting the four core educational assurance areas by aligning standards and using assessments; using data systems, and support service; supporting effective teachers and leaders through professional development and a new comprehensive evaluation system; and providing individual support to student assessment needs, curriculum support is provided to the lowest performing schools.

Evidence is presented for how the applicant will conduct detailed and indepth analysis of data to drive instruction and accelerate student achievement.

They also present evidence of deeping student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks. This is enhanced through learning environments with the use of technology in a variety of settings.

Student academic interests are a high priority focus, numerous strategies are carefully designed and targeted to technology and student and family connections.

The applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the work of the four core educational assurance areas. There is less evidence of a credible approach or plan to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests, the applicant doesn't sufficiently describe what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is not enough detail to determine whether the applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation, a lack of detail is provided for how the reform effort will impact low-socio economic students and their families as well as a plan addressing high-need students.

The applicant has selected to implement a District wide initiative encompasses all PreK-12 schools.

The total number of participating students is 8,771. Numbers of participating high-need students 1,234.

The total percentage of low-socio economic students is 55.85% and the total number of participating educators is 650.

A list of the schools participating is provided.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a good plan for LEA-wide reform and change. The applicant describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change but it does lacks coherence. The outcome goals of the reform effort are not evident and its theory of change for how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students is not clear. But overall they provide a high quality reform effort as provided below.</p> <p>The Broadband extension initiative, language initiative, science labs and curriculum and learning reform are quality reforms. The Broadband extension is noteworthy as a critical component in any further connectivity development. The language initiative and focus on the Asian language is commendable as a targeted market share of the world economy in the future, but more so that we should continue to focus students on second language acquisition. The science lab has a focus on STEM activites which will continue to dominate the world employment market in the foreseeable future. The high level of performance of assessments are commendable, it is admirable that the applicant sees the urgency in ratcheting up the curriculum and learning to compete in the every shrinking world market even with high test scores.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information on being part of a high performing State, ranked number one scoring State in the United States in college preparation. They also show that they are a high performing district with a high percentage of students reaching proficient. They lack supporting detail for is how their vision will improve student learning and performance and increase equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals overall and by student sub group.</p> <p>Graduation rates are provided. Ambitious growth goals are established for schools. Growth goals not provided for national origin subgroups.</p> <p>The College enrollment data is provided with a baseline in SY 2011-12 of 68.4% and SY 2012-13 of 69.0% No goals are provided for 2013-14 and beyond.</p> <p>The applicant provides strong performance data on summative assessments. The District reflects steady growth at 70-80th percentile overall. The District has approximately 50% free/reduced meal rate that is used to determine socio-economic status of the district.</p> <p>The applicant also provides baseline data for 2011-12 and 2012-13 but no growth targets for decreasing achievement gaps.</p> <p>Graduation rates that are reflected in chart show steady growth of 2 to 4%. High Schools are performing at 90.45%, 84.66% and 90.42% with 2% growth for those High Schools already at 90% or better and 4% growth for the school at 84.66%. The graduation rate growth shows a steady upward trend with this target goal.</p> <p>College enrollment data for 4 year college enrollment is up 4% over last year. The reviewer has concerns about the college enrollment gap of African American versus White at (23) 3.08% to (572) 57.64%</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Data for 2003, 2004, 2010 and 2013 is provided. No data is provided for 2010, 2011, 2012.</p> <p>Although there is a record of success reflected of improving student learning outcomes in the data provided from 2003, 2004, 2010, 2013 and it is significant for MSA Reading there is little evidence of a clear record of success in the past 4 years.</p> <p>ACPS has shown a clear record of improving student learning outcomes, including raising student achievement in both MSA Reading and Math, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.</p>		

There is lack of information on closing the achievement gap to increase equity as well as reform efforts in low sub-groups in its lowest performing schools.

In order for the applicant to demonstrate a clear track record of success, there should be evidence of improved student outcomes and closing of the achievement gaps; Achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest performing schools; and making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services. Evidence is lacking in these areas.

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

ACPS shows a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments. ACPS has made public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

Actual personnel salaries: \$45,859,385

Actual personnel salaries (Teachers only) \$35,133,342

Actual non-personnel expenditures at school level \$5,226,039

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In ACPS the personalized learning environment will provide individual educational platforms that learners use to increase their engagement, direct their learning, and pursue educational goals and academic interests.

ACPS's regulatory requirements provide support for successful implementation of the personalized learning environment.

There is a lack of evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. There is sufficient evidence of legal, statutory and regulatory requirements at the District level only.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal. Stakeholders had the opportunity for feedback through parent advisory committees, County Student Government, County Curriculum Committee, and the Teacher Roundtable Committee. The applicant shares information to students, parents and stakeholders via the website and Allegany County Education Television. There is a lack of evidence of what the information was shared, what feedback was received, and how the proposal was revised based on the comments received.

Evidence of support from collective bargaining representation was provided through a letter of support from Teacher's Union.

Letters of support provided from other key stakeholders are provided as evidence in Appendix A.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

ACPS has a strong vision for improving student learning and achievement, through increasing broadband as well as high speed access. The addition of PARRC assessments and online learning environments are key elements of the plan.

Teachers are employing appropriate scaffolding to support instruction, particularly to high need students. High Standards for all learners regardless of abilities, backgrounds and learning styles remains a critical focus. Students are in charge of their own learning and technological tools are provided to help them achieve their learning goals. The Assessment Management System is used to maintain and update individual student data. Technology Infusion Specialists, and Technology Coordinators provide training and support to teachers and students to ensure they have the skills necessary to utilize the technology.

Evidence is provided that training and support will be available to assist students as they develop in personalized learning experience through AMS and UDL, which will deepen learning experiences as well as help gain access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives; and also create deep individual learning experiences.

There is a lack of evidence regarding how students will identify and pursue learning and developmental goals linked to college and career ready standards, career graduation requirements; and how they will understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and measure progress towards those goals.

Evidence of a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development as well as the opportunity for high quality instructional approaches is administered through the Universal Design for Learning model.

The applicant provides ongoing and regular feedback to staff, parents and students. This feedback includes student data by pre and post benchmark assessments. Personalized learning recommendations will be based on student's current knowledge and skills; this will be provided through Universal Design for Learning. Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high need students are provided through synthetic speech and synchronized highlighting of the spoken text, a commendable strategy. All providing evidence of a high-quality plan.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Although the applicant provides some very strong points, there are areas in this section where the applicant does not provide sufficient detail about its high quality plan. Therefore this section earns a medium score.

Multiple levels of staff development are provided in order to prepare staff to increase student achievement and support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments is a strong point of the proposal.

The Universal Design for Learning model adapts content and instruction, and provides opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to academic needs, academic interests and optimal learning approaches, this too is a strong point.

The pre and post benchmark assessment frequently measures student progress towards meeting college and career ready standards, this also is a strong point.

There is a lack of evidence for how the applicant will provide feedback on teacher's and principal's practice and effectiveness by using feedback from the evaluation system.

There is a lack of evidence supporting how all educators will have access to, and know how to use, tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements.

The Universal Design for Learning provides high quality resources and processes and tools to match student needs. This is a strong point.

There is a lack of evidence that all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have or will have training, policies, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment, that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks.

There is a lack of evidence that the applicant has a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including hard to staff schools and specialty areas such as special education.

Strong technology support at school sites is provided.

A variety of technology related educational tools are available and linked to staff development; and tech support is provided. These include one to one mobile devices and interactive white boards.

The applicant provides an exemplary example of second language immersion with Chinese and Spanish.

Because some parts of the criteria were met and others were not the applicant earns a 10 out of 20.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA Central Office provides support and services such as site base leadership through site based allocations, which is in line with personalized learning.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence of school leadership teams in participating schools having flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non educators.</p> <p>There is no evidence of credit based on demonstrated mastery on earned credit by students nor the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple comparable ways.</p> <p>Accommodations and modifications provided to students with disabilities and English learners is stated but examples are not provided.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strong evidence of infrastructure for supporting personalized learning is provided. Extensive database systems, technical support teams, mobile devices and continuous staff development are examples. Each school has Technology Leaders who trouble shoots technical problems and assist with technology during instruction. Tech Infusion teachers provide technical support to teachers for the inclusion of technology into technology plans and delivery.</p> <p>Strong evidence of appropriate levels of technical support are provided through technology leader, tech infusion teachers, the use of co-teaching platforms.</p> <p>The applicant shows that parents and students will have access to on-line grades, on-line text books, teacher assignments via web assign as well as inter operable data systems that include human resource data, student information data and instructional improvement data.</p> <p>There is no evidence of discursion of access to allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use that data in other electronic learning systems such as electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports or software that securely stores personal data.</p> <p>Overall there is a lack of detail that how it will support personalized learning, in many wasy that are specified by the selection criteria.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide evidence of a rigorous continuous improvement processes that provides timely and regular</p>		

feedback on progress towards project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

There is a lack of evidence of a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback. The plan does not show it will monitor and measure information. Detail is lacking on how the applicant will make ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

The plan does not provide sufficient evidence for how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments. For all these reasons the applicant scores low against the criteria.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant says that it will continue to ensure ongoing communication and engagement with internal stakeholders through Board Meetings, Parent Advisory Meetings, and Teacher Roundtables. It says that it will ensure ongoing communication and engagement with external stakeholders through its website, as well as the local television and radio stations.

There is a lack of detail about the information that will be collected and shared as well as frequency of the shared data and then how the information will be used for ongoing communication and engagement. This reflects a lack of evidence of a high quality plan.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

K--8 Reading, Mathematics and Science Benchmarks Assessments (every 9 weeks) were chosen as the performance measure because they provided milestones data points to identify which students are achieving and which need intervention to be successful on the state assessments. The benchmark item analysis also pinpoints where instruction needs to be modified or where a different strategy is needed to allow students to master the indicator being assessed.

K-8 Reading, Mathematics and Science Benchmarks Assessments are provided as baseline data for 2012-2013. The implementation process will be reviewed over time with annual targets will be measured through the post grant period after 2017-2018.

Maryland School Assessments are provided in 3-8 math, MSA Math Farms and MSA Math Sp. Ed. Pre-K -3 data Reading Farms, SPED by benchmark, full readiness subgroup and Social Emotional Damian MMSR. Grade 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Reading, Math, Fitness Report Card, Grade 5 Science, Grade 8 Science.

Performance measures are provided for High School Grades 9-12 Algebra HSA, FARMS, Sp.ED. English, Sp. Ed. Biology, Biology FARMS, Biology FARMS Sp. Ed. Career Readiness 9-12, Algebra, English, Biology, Government, Course Fitness Report Card.

Baseline data is provided for the performance measures.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides student learning objectives in conjunction with the Assessment Management System to monitor personalized learning. There are data analysis strategies provided through principal walk throughs, identification of school wide strengths and weakness, as well as the use of professional learning communities to enhance professional development.

The applicant discusses implementing technology, and using multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction and school improvement priorities. There is a lack of coherent plan bringing these resources together and creating a pathway to reach a vision that is ambitious yet achievable.

In order for the applicants plan for evaluating effectiveness to be considered a high-quality plan there needs to be stronger evidence of a plan around professional development and technology.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project.</p> <p>Budget narrative and tables identify funds that support the District's vision and the proposal is reasonable and sufficient. Fiber broadband extension, Middle School Science Labs, One to One Initiative for High Schools and Middle Schools, Chinese Immersion Program, World Language Program, Benchmark assessments and Stem Externship are included. These narratives and tables provide sufficient detail to be reasonable and sufficient.</p> <p>Clear evidence of thoughtful rationale of investments and priorities in establishing funding priorities is evident. The budget is supported by one time purchases thereby creating sustainability of costs.</p> <p>The broadband connectivity, Middle School science labs, one to one technology are examples of these one time costs. Additional projects are Chinese Immersion program, world language, STEM externship and PARRC benchmark assessments.</p> <p>Research clearly shows that broadband, science labs and the one to one technology devices will have an immediate impact on personalized learning environments. Therefore the applicant scores high for this budget proposal.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient evidence to support the majority of costs in the reform are one time costs and therefore create a strong confidence in the sustainability of the project goals. Examples are the increase of broadband, Middle School Science Labs and One to One Technology devices.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments; or does the plan include support from State and local government leaders, financial support.</p> <p>The criteria does state the plan may address how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to informal a post-grant budget, and include an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources and uses of funds.</p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient detail to support sustainability of projects goals in order to be considered a high-quality plan, although criteria components in this section are lacking in detail.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Coherent and sustainable partnerships provided with public and private organizations: Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, Allegany County Library Stuem, Allegany County Building Trades Foundation, Hanban Institute, Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, Garrett County Public Schools, Department of Information Technology, and the Maryland State Department of Education.</p> <p>The applicant does not identify the 10 population-level desired results for students.</p> <p>The applicant does not propose a plan to track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA and at the student level for the participating students.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe how the partnership will integrate education and other services.</p>		

The applicant does not describe how the partnership would build the capacity of staff in participating in schools.

The lack of detail in population level desired results, tracking indicators, partnerships integrating services as well as building capacity of staff in participating schools makes it difficult to measure the proposal against the selection criteria.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sufficient evidence to support how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards and or college and career ready graduation requirements. The applicant explains how it will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student.

Strong examples are provided such as creating an environment that provides the infrastructure to support technology and curriculum through increased broadband, Middle School science labs, one to one technology devices, Chinese and World language programs, STEM externship and PARRC Benchmark assessments.

The applicant provides evidence that will increase the effectiveness of educators, expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers through multiple levels of teacher training and Universal Design for Learning.

There is a lack of evidence of how each of these items are linked and supported in the plan.

Total	210	124
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