



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0171MD-1 for Baltimore City Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) has written a proposal that builds upon work they have already completed in a 10-year plan. This proposal is the 21st-Century Learning for 21st-Century Schools that contains 4 projects:

1. Content Development: Developing curriculum to meet the new Next Generation Science Standards along with the Common Core State Standards. A triple Venn Diagram is included to show the overlap in the areas of Math, Science, and English Language Arts.
2. Professional Development and Accountability of Highly-Effective Science Teachers and School Leaders: Developing the science background knowledge of all participating science teachers in the district.
3. Management and Evaluation: Writing a new evaluation system for teachers and principals.
4. Technology in 21st Century Schools: Updating the technology in all schools to provide meaningful technology instruction.
5. Community Schools: Involving members of the community in the education and success of students.

In 2012 City Schools launched an initiative to update school buildings and requested the funding from legislature. These updates are especially meaningful in ensuring that the new technology proposal will be successful.

This proposal builds on work in the four assurance areas by 1) adopting Common Core State Standards, PARCC assessments, and college and career-readiness initiatives, 2) creating Data Link, which tracks and reports data about students and learning and makes the data available to appropriate parties, 3) recruiting, developing, and rewarding teachers for their service, and 4) turning around lowest performing schools in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education's Breakthrough Center.

A vignette is included that describes an individualized learning plan from the point of view of a student. This piece of creative writing helps to explain how the district envisions the proposal will alter learning from the student's vantage point.

This proposal is ambitious without being spread too thin, and achievable. Student achievement would be accelerated through a combination of the following:

- Content development in science that would provide video lessons in every topic from highly effective teachers
- Reformed instruction that combines large and small group instruction, personalized learning, and hands-on instruction
- Online learning that allows students to progress at their own pace
- Course credit for demonstrated learning, internships, and other alternative learning environments
- Deepened student learning through partnerships with outside organizations that bring in scientists and real-world learning examples, and internships to area businesses that provide STEM work opportunities in addition to course credits
- Personalized learning approaches that allow students to spend 20% of their course time in self-selected learning projects with teacher support

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

During the initial phases of this proposal, schools were invited to participate based on one of two criteria - schools in years 1 or 2 of the buildings initiative, including 15 schools of which 11 already participate in turnaround or other models; or

schools that are ready to reinvent their science curriculum, which includes 6 schools, 4 of which are turnaround or other models. Schools were invited based upon the fact that they were ready for the science focus, but the application did not indicate how this determination was made or who made it, and further clarification was needed. Each invited school was given a presentation of the proposal, after which the principal and school stakeholders were required to sign up to participate. In total, 21 schools are participating. Of the participating students 84% are from low income families, 85% are African American, and 4% are English Language Learners. 112 science teachers in grades 6-12 will be participating.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes a description of why science in grades 6-12 is the focus. Mathematics and English Language Arts is already strongly addressed with the Common Core State Standards, and the elementary levels have already begun a partnership with Johns Hopkins University and the National Science Foundation to transform learning.

By the end of the grant period City Schools plans to have the technology and structures to extend personalized learning to additional grade levels and content areas. In the first year following the grant's conclusion the district will have begun its fifth stage of implementation in which the model will be further developed but stay flexible to be adaptable for all schools and subjects. The plan will also be expanded to secondary schools that were not included in the initial cohort but who have completed years 3 and 4 of the building initiative. They will also adapt the program for the elementary level and the following year all elementary schools will be included. The scale-up plan is unclear and needs further details. The application states that the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for scaling the project following the grant years to the remainder of the district, but no details are provided how this process will take place and who else will be delegated to this responsibility.

The district has a plan in place to take what is learned in the grant phase and fine tune it to meet the needs of the remaining schools in the district. While this is a high quality plan, more explanation including which participants are responsible for which responsibilities in the scaled up plan are needed. The tables included in the application state that the program development, adaptations, and implementation activities are the responsibility of the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, but this seems too large of a task for a single person, especially if this person has additional responsibilities, and given the roles this person plays elsewhere in the application.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes tables for each of the divisions of (A)(4):

1. The goals for science achievement have been broken down by race, gender, income, and learning disabilities, and include very ambitious goals that will take students up from approximately 35% to approximately 68%. All of the goals appear achievable, and at least 57% of all students in the SWD category and 67% of the general category will demonstrate science proficiency by the 2017-2018 school year.
2. The tables that demonstrate the goals for decreasing achievement gaps are shown in reading, English, and mathematics for grades 3 through high school. The largest gaps currently exist in the Students With Disabilities and the English Language Learners categories, and while some progress is noted in the last two years, there are lofty goals in the years of the grant and following.
3. Graduation rates are shown for school year 2011-12, but 2012-13 is not included as it was not available at the time the grant was written. The graduation goals are shown for the next five years, and they are certainly very achievable, with an average increase of approximately 8 percentage points. While the goals might not be met, they need to be much more ambitious in this section for this grant.
4. The data for college enrollment is included in 2011-12 but not yet available for 2012-13. The expected increase in college enrollment is extremely ambitious, with an average increase of 30 percentage points.

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	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In the last 10 years, City Schools has shown remarkable growth in both reading and mathematics. Reading scores have climbed from 48.8% of students scoring proficient or better to 67.9%, and math grew from 33.5% to 58.9%. Last year they achieved a 63.4% in math but the new Common Core State Standards testing brought down the scores, as expected. The achievement gaps have met Maryland State's standards, but the achievement gaps in science are even more dramatic than in Reading and Math, which is why this project is so needed. In the last five years AP course registration and AP test taking have more than doubled. The narrative did not mention high school achievement rates, but tables are included in the appendix, which show that over the last five years Algebra scores have decreased by 3.5%, English scores have decreased by 11.9%, and Biology skills have decreased by 8.6. While this proposal would improve the Biology skills, there is no plan in place to address this large decrease in English skills. Graduation rates have increased, especially in the last two years of the 21st Century Learning project, with the largest gains for African American students with a 5.52% increase, and special education students with a 8.06% increase. Enrollment in 2-year colleges has increased over the last four years, but unfortunately the enrollment in 4-year colleges has decreased over the same time period. The project aims to continue their current project which has doubled the number of students who take and pass Advanced Placement courses and SAT exams, which both signal 4-year college ambitions. City Schools partners with Maryland State Department of Education's Breakthrough Center to help reform its persistently lowest-achieving schools. This partnership has begun to make some successful turnarounds. Student performance data is available to concerned parties through Data Link, the district database, and Parent Portal, the parents' information system. Families without internet access have other resources such as public libraries, community and recreation centers, church computer labs, and school labs which stay open late for family use.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

City Schools publishes their personnel salaries and school-level expenses on the district's website, as well as the sites for The Baltimore Sun and the federal government's Civil Rights Data Collection initiative. Each school develops its own budget and is responsible for making it available to the public via its website. School budgets contain the actual salaries of instructional and non-instructional staff, by job description, which exceeds the level of transparency asked for in this grant.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Maryland State regulations allow districts to implement personalized learning in its schools and use non-traditional methods of obtaining credit, provided the district develop a plan that content is included and standards are met. Online courses are also approved for up to 9 credits, as well as work-study programs, job-entry training programs, and other out-of-classroom experiences. Each of these non-traditional learning experiences is an important component of this proposal. The state also requires that districts who compose curriculum use UDL principles, which were also considered in the construction of this project. Several specific sections of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) are cited that demonstrate autonomy in release from seat time requirements, early graduation based upon credit for non-traditional learning such as work-study programs, job-entry training, and other out-of-classroom experiences. This proposal clearly meets all of the regulations that will go into effect in the 2014-15 school year regarding instructional materials, assessments, and professional development.

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

15

12

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal is part of the 21st-Century Schools plan which began in 2012. For this component community forums were held which gave input to district-wide and school-level recommendations. Specific strategies were developed with science teachers, principals, representatives from the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (PSASA), the Baltimore Teachers Union, district administrators, and other community partners. This plan was presented to the Board of School Commissioners and made available for public comment. Community meetings were then held to ensure that the public fully understood the plan. Letters of support were provided from the Maryland State Department of Education, PSASA, many local universities, and the Parent Community Advisory Board. Later the plan was discussed at a meeting of student representatives, who were highly supportive of the plan, although there is no indication of any significant student input from the conceptual development of the plan.

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



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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The 21st-Century Learning plan composes a variety of learning opportunities for students. 80% of class time will include whole group, small group, and individualized instruction, while 20% of class time will be devoted to an innovative year-long student-driven project, called Evidence-Based Exploration projects, or EBE. These projects are student selected with teacher guidance and allow students to explore topics of interest to them using the skills and strategies learned in class, which allow students to experience deep learning environments that are meaningful to them. These projects will also help students understand the importance of what they are learning as they need to use these skills to complete their projects, a learning habit which will be especially useful in college and career. Online personalized learning programs will also be available to allow students to relearn materials or move ahead at their pace. Highly effective teachers in the district will be invited to record lessons using the new standards to create exemplar videos that can be accessed by other teachers and students. These recordings will give all students in the district access to the highest quality materials with the ability to personalize their learning sequences and skill development to match their needs. Students also have opportunities to participate in real-world learning experiences, such as paid and non-paid internships and other community involvement programs. Students will maintain ePortfolios, a database of their learning evidence and reflections, which is accessible to teachers and parents. Teachers can use this information to better personalize learning experiences for each student and provide regular feedback to help students see their progress toward the mastery of skills. These ePortfolios will be especially valuable to special needs students as they can learn to self-identify their own needs and actively work on meeting their own goals. City Schools also plans to build on its current partnership with the Center for Applied Special Technology, a nonprofit research and development organization, to increase the use of UDL in classroom instruction and help teachers understand its use, especially as it applies to high-needs students. One of the most omitted forms of optional learning currently available is for Rising 9th graders and summer science curriculum. A Summer Science Academy will be started next summer to meet both of these needs and provide more opportunities for teachers to gain professional development in the creation of lessons for the Academy.

This is a very high quality plan that is ambitious, yet achievable. One weakness noted was a more detailed description of the various tasks, timelines, accountability, job descriptions, etc., to demonstrate that the project had been completely planned and all details had been considered. Activity E includes recording lessons from effective and highly effective teachers and is a critical component of the overall project, and yet these lessons have not been recorded yet, and appears to be an overwhelming task to select the teachers and lessons, ensure they meet all of the standards, and record them. The timeline given states that these lessons will begin to be recorded in the 2014-2015 school year, and continue to be recorded throughout the duration of the grant. This would imply that a complete set of high quality video lessons that meet all of the science standards will not be available until the end of the grant period or later, which means that some of the goals of this plan will not be met within the grant period.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Professional development will be provided to participating teachers and school leaders in eight key areas that include delivering high-quality instruction, teaching students perseverance, measuring college and career readiness, developing technology skills, adapting to a culture of communities of practice, helping students set goals and take ownership of their learning, using ePortfolios, and providing interventions for high-needs students. This training will be very effective to help science teachers reinvent their classrooms and make learning a hands-on, interactive experience. The training will also help teachers learn to assess their students in new ways with the goal of college and career-readiness, and to help students examine their own learning evidence and take ownership of their learning. These areas also mesh perfectly with the goals set out in the 21st-Century Buildings initiative. A new teacher evaluation system began this year in which administrators rate teachers on their performance in all nineteen Key Actions of the Instructional Framework. Teacher leaders will be developed as each school selects one teacher who will participate in additional opportunities and bring that knowledge back to the school. This position will also help teachers advance their careers on the district's rating scale. Teachers will receive direction instruction in technology needs but will also participate in the Reverse Mentoring, a model currently in use in which high school students in technology programs assist teachers and staff.

This is a high quality plan that provides greatly improved science instruction and learning skills for all middle and high school students in participating schools. A downfall of this plan is the expectations of increased teacher collaboration, professional development, and restructured lessons, with a very limited amount of time provided for this to happen. Some teachers will be invited to participate in the summer academy, however, these teachers would then be expected to lead their schools once they return, which increases their workload considerably. Another key component of this proposal is the recorded science lessons that students could access anytime, anywhere. These lessons have not yet been recorded, and

would need to be done over several years of the grant, meaning the model could not be fully implemented until later. These videos are one of the strengths of the proposal, but according to the timeline, a complete set will not be available to students until they have been working on the online learning component for several years. It was not made clear how one administrator would select these teachers, if they would receive compensation, how all of the standards would be covered effectively, and when they would have time to record these lessons. There was also no mention of specific training that principals and school leaders would receive to better help them support the science teachers and evaluate the teachers and the program effectively.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This application includes a high quality plan that will support the education system in many ways.</p> <p>In recent years, City Schools has worked to reduce the number of administrative personnel and to de-centralize the district office. Student Support Networks (SSN) are in place to provide each group of schools with support structures, assistance in academic content delivery, and student support.</p> <p>Schools have a great deal of flexibility in their choices regarding budgets, having just 3% choice in 2008 to 81% in 2014. Schools make their own personnel decisions, except for required positions. Schools are given district-wide calendars, and have flexibility to change it as it sees the need, provided that it follows legal restrictions, and receives a favorable vote of 80% from teachers in the union.</p> <p>City Schools currently requires that students be graded on proficiency, rather than seat time or course completion. This proficiency can be demonstrated through a portfolio of activities and assessments, allowing students to move at their own pace. Beginning in middle school, students are permitted to double up on courses, which could lead to graduation one year early. Students may also partake in dual enrollment in high school and local colleges.</p> <p>One of the goals of this project is to provide more adaptability into its current learning practices by allowing students to progress at their own rates and providing more teacher availability. Instructional approaches in science will be changed that allow 20% of the time to be allotted for students to work on self-selected research projects. During that time teachers are available to work with students needing extra help or guidance. Videos will be created by highly-effective science teachers on each topic of the science curriculum according to the Next Generation Science Standards, which are accessible anytime, anywhere by all students, including those identified as special needs or English Language Learners, parents, and other teachers. These videos and other online science courses will allow students to progress at their own pace.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal includes a high quality plan to address personalized learning through the infrastructure as follows:

City Schools will provide a class set of wireless computing devices, assumed to be laptops, in each science classroom. This means that each science teacher will be able to use them in the classroom setting as needed. Also, all juniors and seniors will be issued tablets to use during internships and their long-term projects. Students, teachers, and parents can access all of the academic content as well as student performance data. Families who do not have online technology at home can access tablets after school hours and at local libraries. Technology support will be provided via informational sessions, trainings, and individualized support to teachers. City Schools also uses a reverse mentoring program whereby students from the technology high school assist teachers in their technological needs. Students and parents can access online support from the IT Service Support Center, in addition to back to school night trainings and open houses.

The current assessment system and the Parent Portal do not allow parents and students to export their information to an open data format. Part of this project includes updating this system so that by Year 2 this will no longer be a problem. This technology update is an important component of this high quality plan because it will allow students and parents to utilize the data in other electronic learning systems, rather than simply view it.

City Schools already uses many data systems that are inter operable such as student management systems, transportation systems, human resources, finances, Data Link, Parent Portal, and others. All content delivery programs purchased for this project will be required to be inter operable with existing school data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal includes a high quality plan for continuous improvement. This plan includes the hiring of a third party evaluator who will complete a comprehensive evaluation of the project, looking at feedback on the attainment of goals, impact study, and efficiency study. These studies will include quarterly reports, summary data, tracked performance measures, feedback, and student outcomes. Tables are included in the application that describe each product, why it is being used, and when it is due. The governing board and an advisory committee will be important components of the improvement process as they evaluate the results from the evaluator and make decisions on the direction of the project. City Schools takes pride in its transparency about district initiatives and reform. These evaluations will be shared via the website and social media, videos of the meetings are available on local television and can be borrowed from the library, a monthly newsletter will include updates, and local media outlets will be utilized.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Chief Academic Officer, Project Director, Grant Manager, and each Project Sponsor will meet often throughout the life of the grant to evaluate the progress of 21st Century Learning. Each member of the board will be assigned with providing ongoing communication with assigned internal stakeholders, including principals, teachers, and students. These school stakeholders then report their findings back to the governing board via their assigned board member. This plan relies upon messages being transmitted back and forth, which may not always give the intended meaning, and does not give internal stakeholders a form of direct communication with key project personnel and does not demonstrate that key project personnel value this input.</p> <p>An Advisory Committee will be formed with a mix of internal and external stakeholders, including business representatives, teachers' union representatives, parents, higher education, and students. This committee will meet quarterly to share responses. The Office of Engagement will solicit partnerships from community groups to work with community resources as part of the Engagement Leadership Program, a program based on a similar program currently being used that is successful in the district. School level Engagement Leadership Teams will also be formed to identify needs and discuss ideas. This component is a high quality plan that invites many community members to become involved in and engaged with the schools.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This plan includes twelve performance goals for grades 6 through 12, and includes tables that show current and expected data results. Most of these goals are similar to those listed on the application, and therefore no rationale for the goals is included. Two of the performance measures involve students self-identifying themselves in an anonymous survey as having developed perseverance. The potential results of this survey are questionable, including the lack of reliability in the responses when students cannot be identified at this age level, and the difficulty in measuring such an abstract character quality. There are no performance measures that meet the categories of health, social, or emotional learning, which are required measures. The lack of strong performance measures and the lack of explanation make this a poor section of this proposal.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is a high quality plan that includes a minimum of quarterly meetings of the governing board in which the impact and results of the proposal are examined and recommendations for changes are made. An outside evaluator will be hired to evaluate and make recommendations on an ongoing basis to ensure the program is achieving its goals and keeping costs down.</p>		

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>City Schools is requesting a grant of approximately \$17 million dollars over the four-year period, while the anticipated cost of the entire project is nearly \$72 million. The other money is being leveraged from the 21st Century Learning project. This initiative has 5 projects, and the one using the most grant money is curriculum content and development. The rationale is included in other parts of the application, and not needed here. Each of the budget tables breaks down each cost by the four years of the grant cycle, a brief explanation of the expense, and additional comments as needed. The budget is complete and inclusive of all anticipated costs. The largest areas of spending are in content and development and technology in 21st-Century schools, which is appropriate to the goals of this project and the aims of this grant program. Personnel costs are higher in the first two years as they involve hiring a curriculum writer, curriculum support consultant, family/student engagement consultants, outside evaluators, and others. These curricula personnel would finish their work during the grant period so the budget requires fewer funds in the final year. The budget category of Supplies appears excessive initially, but the description indicates that this category includes all of the science classroom tools, consumables, and equipment for every science classroom in the district. Years 2 through 4 include a budget for breakage and replacement of consumables, which would need to be budgeted by individual schools following the grant period.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>City Schools has written a high quality plan for sustainability of project goals by adopting Washington University's Program Sustainability Framework as a guide for the project. This field tested and researched work includes eight key necessities for sustainability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Support - to be evidenced by the new Mayor of Baltimore who has made creating better schools a top priority • Funding Stability - which would be accomplished through the Race to the Top - District funding • Partnerships - a strength with City Schools who has identified several STEM and higher education partnerships • Organizational Capacity - as represented by the current staff and the planning for the new program members • Communications - discussed earlier in the communications section of the application • Program Evaluation - to be completed by an outside source to be objective <p>One element that was lacking in this proposal was a budget that showed expenses for the next three years following the grant period. If this plan is to be sustained there would be related expenses, and the expectation that schools would provide some of this funding is unrealistic, especially in these economic times.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>City Schools is proposing a plan to involve community partnerships to help solve some of its academic and social needs. Its partnership with the FLBC, an organization of public and private groups, offers resource coordination to improve the well-being of Baltimore's children and families. The goals include reducing chronic absenteeism, improving school safety and climate, collecting data to measure outcomes, and increasing parent, family, and community engagement.</p> <p>Another program that is currently in place in two schools is the Incentive Mentoring Program, which connects highly-trained and committed volunteers to individual students needing special help. These needs might include transportation, health care access, job search assistance, and much more. To date, 100% of the IMP students have stayed in school and 96% have been accepted to college.</p> <p>Population-level desired results are included in a table, and they are divided into educational outcomes and family and community supports. City Schools' Office of Achievement and Accountability tracks the data for all children within the district. Detailed work plans have been created to outline the responsibilities for staff regarding data analysis. The FLBC</p>		

has committed to accessing the system on a weekly basis to identify student attendance, provide support to school staff and families for grades having low attendance, identify students who have chronic absenteeism, support school-based efforts to address causes of chronic absence, and support students and families to eliminate barriers to attendance.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This application addresses the needs to complete the 21st Century Learning project, which includes plans to update and improve the science curriculum, provide technology for personalized learning for students in grades 6 through 12, and provide professional development for teachers to use the technology for teaching and assessment, in order to provide more differentiated instruction in the classroom. At the student level, these changes would be evidenced by an entirely new learning environment, in which 20% of class time is devoted to working on student-selected projects and receiving extra help from teachers. The classroom teaching model would go from the traditional lecture-type class to being a hands-on, interactive environment in which students work in large and small groups in inquiry-based learning. Highly effective teachers will create a library of lessons on every science topic that will be available to all students and families at anytime, anywhere. These lessons will be combined with online learning opportunities to allow students to progress at their own rate. Course completion will no longer be measured by seat time, but will allow students to gain course credits by demonstrating mastery and participating in learning opportunities outside of school, such as internships.

Total	210	189
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0171MD-2 for Baltimore City Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant builds on work in 4 core education assurance areas (MSA results rising; downsizing LEA central office, etc.)
- The vignette provided describes classroom experience for students and teachers. This is a nice addition to the applicant's proposal
- The applicant describes a clear vision that builds on specific reform efforts identified in the first part of this section.
- Based upon the description of previous gains made, and the clear plan outlined within the section, the applicant's proposed vision warrants a high score.
- The applicant's vision for the RTTD plan focuses primarily on science instruction, rather than instruction in all core content areas. This could be a minor weakness in the section, however, the vin diagram included shows clear ties to ELA and mathematics.
- The student vignette helped illustrate all of the curriculum design elements included in personalized instruction (sentences; modeling; playground; human bone)
- The included plans are very thorough and detailed. Table with Board goals and priorities aligned to RTTD

- The applicant provides data that show a 10 year track record of gains in core academic areas; graduation rates and decreased drop-out rates. These range from approx 5% to over 10% growth. The applicant plans to build upon this progress.
- The applicant's current efforts to ensure the recruitment, growth and retention of highly effective educators is commendable. The local bargaining unit is supportive of the current efforts. Evaluation methods include tracks that balance student achievement, educator leadership and educator growth. The method allows teachers to pursue career tracks and plan for their own growth. This is a strength.
- This section addresses all of the selection criteria, in detail. As a result, it warrants the highest score.

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

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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Description of process used to select schools was clear and concise. It warrants a mid to high score.
- Information about participating schools is included and the rationale for included these schools is clear (21st Century Buildings; Scale Up; Opt In)
- Total number of participating schools, students, demographics are provided and seem to fit well with RTTD criteria and efforts to close the achievement gap.
- Number of participating schools and students could be relatively small in comparison to the total LEA population.
- The percentage of students considered "high need" is relatively high (over 90%) however, it is unclear whether these are considered high need due to being economically disadvantaged. This is a minor weakness.
- The percentage of students with disabilities is high (a strength). ELLs may be a little low.
- Principals and administrators seem involved in the opt in process. This is a strength.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- High quality plan for reform process and scaling up is included and provides clear ties to the applicant's vision and previous work.
- The applicant describes specific efforts that the LEA has made in both implementing the CCSS and in STEM. The proposed activities are clearly tied to those efforts.
- Stages of implementation very good - NIRN plan for program implementation with additional support and attention to sustainability
- Activities A, B and C, (A = Develop innovations to program and adaptations for mathematics, ELA and social studies; B = Design program for elementary science, grades K-5; C = Implement program in all schools throughout the district) with rationales and timelines address the high quality plan requirement
- Deliverables are identified with each activity. These seem meaningful and perfectly aligned with each activity. This is a strength.
- The sustainability plan, and associated chart, is thorough and creates a blueprint for effective sustainability.
- It is unclear whether there is enough support (additional staff; release time, etc.) to effectively implement a rigorous, ambitious plan. This is a minor weakness in this section.
- This section is concise and provides the high quality plan referenced in the selection criteria. It warrants a relatively high score.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Performance on summative assessments is addressed with reasonable goals included.
- Decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates and increasing college enrollment are also addressed in the goals included.
- Graduation rate increases are achievable and fairly ambitious - it would be nice to see a little greater increase in graduation rate, however, due to the decrease in drop-out rate, the stated increase seems ambitious.
- College enrollment increases are ambitious - this is true for all groups of students. The increase for SWD, FARM and African American students is impressive and a strength in this section.
- This section warrants a high score due to the extensive goals tied directly to the plan, and addressing all areas of the selection criteria.

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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides evidence of a clear track record of success with specific data on increases in both math and ELA scores. • In addition, the applicant provides specific information regarding closing the achievement gap between all groups except students considered economically disadvantaged and those not in that category. • Increases in reading and math scores, for SWD, FARM and ELL) range from 4% to 20% from 2007-2013. This demonstrates a clear track record of success over the past 6 years. • In addition, high school graduation rates have increased significantly over the past several years (5% overall; 8% for SWD). Given the decrease in dropout rate, this is impressive. • The applicant notes that chronic absentee rates have decreased by 4% overall and by almost 18% in grades 6-8. This demonstrates a clear emphasis (and track record) of improving specific learning outcomes for students, by ensuring students are receiving high quality instruction daily. • The applicant includes a chart with the progress of turnaround schools. These data show a mixture of gains and loss. This is a minor weakness in this section. • Data also seems easily available to stakeholders, based on the information provided by the applicant. (Data Link; Parent Portal) • This section is well-written and warrants a high score. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant addresses increasing transparency in LEA practices in a thorough manner. This section also warrants a high score. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Salaries for school level instructional and support staff and non-personnel expenditures are provided by the LEA. ◦ School level expenditures are available on the district website ◦ Schools have autonomy in developing budgets ◦ Local newspaper reports data regularly ◦ Community meetings are held to allow stakeholders to have input into the budget (and other processes) 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy within the State, are provided and seem more than adequate to address this selection criteria. It warrants a high score. • Applicant cites MD regulations giving autonomy to the LEA • Adoption of CCSS and NGSS - development of district curriculum aligned with these standards • UDL guidelines incorporated beginning in the 2013-14 school year • Students allowed (by State code) to move into careers early • Students can utilize non-traditional methods of gaining credit, including demonstration by taking an exam/test • State code also allows the LEA to determine its own system of reporting and grading • One of the strengths of this section is the inclusion of specific code/rules from the State 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided meaningful stakeholder engagement in the grant development process and a very thorough description of how different stakeholder groups participated • Letters of support are included • The stakeholder involvement, in this proposal, seemed to be gathered after the proposal was developed. 		

- Stakeholder engagement was gathered, from students, by having them look at the proposal and write letters of support.
- Letters of support were a strength for this section.
- Stakeholder engagement reviewed as part of this section, seemed to be focused on the building plan and development of the reform efforts already underway.
- While it is good that the applicant gathered input regarding the developed proposal, the intent of this section is to gather input in the development of the proposal. It is unclear whether that input was obtained. As a result, this section warrants a mid-range score.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides a high level of detail in this section. All elements in the selection criteria are addressed. The section warrants a high score. • Whole group and small group instruction are described in a way that sounds engaging and ensures students are engaged and involved in the learning process • Self-guided instruction is addressed within the narrative • Evidence based exploration addresses personalized learning in a detailed manner • E portfolios offer students the chance to prepare for future career and college plans • Needs of students with disabilities and ELLs are addressed in the section regarding additional accommodations - strategies are evidence based and represent best practices • Table and timeline provide a roadmap for implementation • This section provides a detailed and high quality plan for meeting the specific selection criteria. • Students are offered opportunities for both credit recovery and advanced coursework • Students will have one on one meetings with students – this is a strength; however, it is unclear how often these will occur and whether teachers will have these responsibilities in addition to their teaching schedule (how will they have time for the meetings). This is a minor weakness in this section. • The activities may also be fairly broadly defined in this section. • Summer science academy for 9th graders is a good opportunity to add to the high quality plan and to help students pursue learning goals (personalized) • This section is well-written and has some excellent plans for addressing the selection criteria, however, it is concerning that the applicant has included so many activities that may place a burden on existing staff and on the project director. It is unclear whether all of these things can be implemented with the resources identified. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section seems very ambitious given the limited amount of collaboration time educators have to discuss and implement all of the elements in the plan. • The section includes good strategies, however, it seems questionable whether the plan is achievable, given all of the responsibilities LEA and school staff members have as a part of the RTTD (when will lessons be developed and recorded; is a 2 day training in the summer enough time; will teachers and administrators have any additional time to collaborate and work on these plans or is the 45 minute collaboration time supposed to include all of the proposed activities) • The plan, in this section, is very high quality, if additional time and resources were allocated. Given the current resources, the plan may be ambitious but is not likely to be achievable. • Approach to teaching and leading – not as clearly addressed by the format of the section, however, the following items do seem to be addressed in the table included. This section warrants a mid-range score. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All educators engage in professional development ◦ Support effective implementation of personalized learning environment ◦ Adapt content and instruction ◦ Frequently measure student progress ◦ Improve practice by using feedback 		

- o Have access to data, tools and prof dev to be able to use them
- o Training and data systems
- o Leadership teams with access to pd and data
- o The applicant provides a somewhat high quality plan, however the plan may be over-extending staff

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does an excellent job of addressing the LEA Practices and policies to show that there is support for the proposed activities as well as support for personalized learning. This section warrants a high score and addresses the following (through examples such as SSN; downsizing LEA office, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Central office has policies and procedures that support personalized learning o Organized governance structure that supports all schools in the LEA o Leadership teams have flexibility and autonomy o Students can show mastery in multiple ways at multiple times o Learning and instructional resources are available to all students – adaptable and accessible 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LEA and School Infrastructure – concise review of the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Students, parents and teachers have access to all content and instruction o Students, parents and teachers have technical support o Information technology systems allow students and parents to access data o Schools have interoperable data system o This section warrants a high score due to the high quality plan for addressing all stakeholder groups and providing data and technology systems that address selection criteria 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is well written and includes a high quality plan for continuous improvement. It warrants a high score • The applicant includes a rigorous plan for evaluation – RFP process for external evaluator; and specific implementation and evaluation measures are addressed within the section • Timely feedback is addressed in the table and associated timeline • Project goals and activities are identified and reasonable • Each goal is broken down in a clear and comprehensive way • Analysis and reporting are clear and are done through a variety of media types • Table includes elements such as feedback on goal attainment, efficiency and impact . . . shows that the applicant is thinking through the elements of the evaluation process. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section includes specific actions related to providing ongoing communication to all stakeholder groups. • The applicant suggests hiring a project manager to implement all aspects of the project. 		

- The family menu provides families with appropriate engagement opportunities
- Timeline is included with the table that is part of this section
- There is a question, regarding this section, about whether feedback will be provided directly to project and LEA personnel or whether the feedback will be filtered through a 3rd party. This is a minor weakness, and may actually help provide additional resources (a concern for other activities within the proposal) to assist in this aspect of the RTTD program.
- This section is well written and warrants a high score due to the high quality plan for ongoing communication

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Good coverage of all required performance measures
- Good strategies outlines to monitor each of the performance measures
- A few performance measures included are self-reported student surveys. This may not produce valid or reliable data. This is a major weakness of this section because it is not a true performance measure.
- Again, there is a question regarding who will collect these data and how surveys will be completed for the additional surveys.
- This section is clear, concise and includes a high quality plan to monitor achievement of performance measures. It warrants a medium range score due to some weaknesses in the self-report measures.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Good use of tables to address this section and to illustrate the plan proposed to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed project.
- The applicant includes a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall project.
- Quarterly meetings are included
- Activities tied to key goals allow for additional evaluation and continuous improvement
- Deliverables are listed for each activity
- An external evaluator will be hired to implement this part of the proposal and to address items within this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent! • Extremely thorough and well-thought through budget plan • All funds are addressed (from all sources) • Budget narrative addresses specific portions of the project (tied to timeline and implementation plan) • Budget seems reasonable to support the efforts proposed • This section warrants a high score due to the fact that all funds (from all sources) are addressed and line items are appropriate for grant activities 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding sustainability plan is a little more brief than other sections of the grant. • A high quality plan is briefly addressed - primarily through providing a table and timeline that include the development of the high quality sustainability plan • The weaknesses in this section include the lack of specific plans to gain additional funding (general approaches to gaining funding are included) • No budget for the years following the grant 		

- This section warrants a medium range score due to the lack of detail and information about specific sustainability efforts after the grant period ends
- This section warrants a mid-range score due to the lack of as much detail - and the general way that sustainability is addressed through the activities described

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are outlined in detail and provide support for the overall project • Integrating community schools and other services - personalizing for students is very good • Mentoring plan is good (incentive mentoring) 10:1 ratio is very good • Performance measures are somewhat subjective (minor weakness); however, they reflect some of the less easily measured outcomes that these partnerships should foster • Expanding community schools seems to address achievement gap and providing services to the neediest students/families • Community schools deal with the same goals (decrease absenteeism; improve school climate; improve safety; improve student outcomes, etc.) • Tables with activities, rationale, timeline and deliverables are aligned to overall RTTD goals and to specific LEA activities (as well as to the track record of success and the reform efforts that led to that success) • Good plan - warrants a high score 		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant describes, in detail, the personalized learning environment (including a vignette) that creates a picture of what that would look like. The vignette, at the beginning of the application, provides the reader with a picture of how the personalized learning environment will look. • The plan for highly effective educators allows for a variety of methods of professional development and career growth. It focuses on improving science education using multiple medias and strategies (video; evaluation; curriculum development; teacher leaders; scale up; sustainability) • The district has a track record of reform that is focused on high need schools and high need students. It is impressive that SWD have made significant growth in so many areas. In addition, all subgroups, as well as the overall population of students, have made growth in reading and math achievement as well as in increased attendance; increased graduation; decreased drop-out and an increase in overall college and career preparedness. This proposal builds directly on that foundation • Excellent job on the entire proposal - very thorough; high quality plans are included 		

Total	210	185
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Race to the Top - District



Technical Review Form

Application #0171MD-3 for Baltimore City Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners reform philosophy developed from 2011-2013 prioritizes classroom instruction, standards-based learning and assessment, data-driven instructional decision-making, the reorganization of support systems, and turning around the lowest performing schools. The Board goals and priorities align with the four core educational assurance areas. Each of the goals is linked to a project that is part of the applicant's proposed program.</p> <p>The applicant is proposing a science initiative for grades 6-12 that will correlate with initiatives already in place in the district. Curriculum will be aligned with Common Core State Standards that emphasize rigorous preparation for college and career. It will also be aligned with industry standards that will build a skill and knowledge base for student success.</p> <p>Academic supports for high-need students will be addressed at multi-tiered levels, including utilization of the concepts of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL will provide students choice in the process of design that draws on their strengths, personalized learning that encourages student choice, individualized learning designed by teacher to provide support with areas of weakness, and inclusive classroom settings that promote equity.</p> <p>Student achievement will be accelerated through the use of technology which will allow students to progress at their own pace. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to double classes or participate in dual enrollment at local colleges.</p> <p>Evidence Based Explorations (EBEs) will be implemented to deepen student learning. Students will devote 20% of science class time to a year-long real-world problem-solving project of the student's choice.</p> <p>The descriptions included about the five proposed projects describe how each component will contribute to the program's clear and credible approach to 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.</p> <p>The application includes a classroom vignette that describes what the classroom experience might be like for both students and teachers.</p> <p>Teachers will facilitate student learning through online self-paced personalized learning that addresses their learning styles and needs.</p> <p>Small group instruction, self-talk strategies, and learning to monitor the learning process will be utilized to help students who struggle to make progress.</p> <p>Teacher leaders will facilitate Collaborative Planning Sessions among science teachers on a weekly basis to help teachers move toward full integration of personalized learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Schools were targeted to participate based on one of two criteria. A memo was drafted to principals of each targeted school containing the final list of outcomes and requirements for participation in the program and a webinar was held to answer questions. All participating schools had to opt-in by submitting a form signed by the building principal and school stakeholders.</p> <p>A list of the 21 participating schools was included in the application.</p> <p>Demographic data was provided for each participating school that identified the total number of participating students, total</p>		

number of participating students from low-income families, total number of participating students who are high-need students, and total number of participating educators.

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

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and help the applicant reach its outcome goals. Three key goals have been established to address this criterion. Three activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goals. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.

The applicant describes the district's vision for successful implementation and scaling up of the proposed project. The applicant explains how the proposed project will be integrated with the initiatives currently in place in the district.

This application clearly explains how the vision of the proposed program will lead to LEA-wide reform and change by addressing each component of this criterion.

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

10

9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed project specifically targets areas within City Schools in which growth and improvement are needed: secondary science education, perseverance and non-cognitive factors, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. All targets meet or exceed State Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) metrics.

Ambitious yet achievable annual goals are identified for performance on summative assessments at all levels, decreasing achievement gaps, and college enrollment rates that are likely to result in improved student learning and performance and in increased equity.

The annual goals for graduation rates target an increase of 1.5% to 2%. While these goals are achievable, this nominal increase is not ambitious.

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	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Data is included in the application that shows academic achievement growth on state math and reading assessments for students in grades 3-8 during the past nine years. The high school assessment data does not show academic achievement growth. The data provided for test results at the high school level does not demonstrate a track record of success.

High school graduation rates have increased 13.99 percentage points between 2007 and 2012.

Two year college enrollment has increased since SY 2007-2008. Four year college enrollment has declined in the past four years.

City School works with the Maryland State Department of Education's Breakthrough Center to achieve reforms in persistently low-achieving schools. The data provided does not demonstrate a clear record of success in turning around these schools. The scores on math assessments have decreased in four of the schools. Data is not provided for math and reading assessments for two of the schools. The data provided does not cover the four year period as requested in the criterion.

Data Link and Parent Portal make student performance data available and easily accessible to students, educators, and parents.

Data Link provides performance data to students and educators. Students can access their personal data to develop a real-time understanding of their performance on assessments and assess their growth. Educators can view data by student, class, skill, or standard.

Parent Portal serves as an online communication vehicle to parents about academic performance and attendance. Parent Portal will be integrated with the ePortfolio that is a part of the proposed program.

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

Information about practices, processes, and investments is available through the district website. This includes actual personnel salaries and actual non-personnel expenditures. This demonstrates a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.

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

City Schools has sufficient autonomy under the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. COMAR provides an open definition of credit; release from seat time requirements for promotion and graduation; an option for local districts to create unique and non-traditional standards-based curricular plans; alternatives to the traditional length of learning requirements; alternatives to traditional in-class learning; and a state requirement of UDL in local curriculum and instructional development.

The application links program components to regulations that allow those components to be implemented.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application does not include a description of how students in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal.

The application does not include a description of how families in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal.

The application does not include a description of how principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal. Deciding to opt-in after attending a webinar does not demonstrate involvement in the development of the proposal.

Eight teachers from five schools met to discuss the development of the proposal. They gave feedback about the use of ePortfolios, collaborated on defining content/standard mastery, and voices suggestions about what is needed to make this proposal successful.

Listening Sessions were held with stakeholders to collect feedback on personalized learning and college- and career-readiness.

Community partner organizations were invited to give feedback.

The application lists six themes that emerged as a result of stakeholder feedback and addresses how revision involving each of these themes were more fully incorporated into the proposed program.

While feedback was obtained from various stakeholders, overall, the application does not provide a clear picture of how specific groups of stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal. The feedback from the stakeholders was solicited after the proposal had been developed.

The application describes how feedback was sought in the development of the district's building initiative, but not for the proposed project.

Letters of support are included in the application. Letters represent various stakeholder groups including: educator, student, and parent organizations; government; business community; civil rights organizations and advocacy groups; local civic and community based organizations; and institutions of higher education/teacher preparation providers.

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence-Based Exploration (EBE) projects will allow students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. Students will spend 20% of their science class time completing year-long student-driven culminating projects. The EBEs will also help facilitate student mastery of critical academic content as well as development of skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. The other 80% of science classroom time will be spent in either whole group instruction, small group instruction, or self-guided instruction.</p> <p>Students will develop ePortfolios to inform their reflections on their skills and needs, helping them plan immediate next steps, and attainment of longer term goals. This will help facilitate student understanding that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. The ePortfolios will also help participating students identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career- ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals.</p> <p>The application does not describe how the proposed program will give students access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.</p> <p>The proposed program provides many strategies that will give each student access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career- ready.</p> <p>The proposed program includes a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments including whole group instruction, small group instruction, and self-guided instruction. High school students will have the opportunity to participate in dual-enrollment or credit-recovery programs.</p> <p>The content will be aligned with Common Core State Standards as well as Next Generation Science Standards. This will help ensure that the content is high-quality.</p> <p>Students will have one-on-one meetings with teachers to go over ePortfolio data. The application does not indicate how frequently these meetings will occur.</p> <p>The application indicates that science teachers are responsible for keeping the standards tracking portion of the portfolio updated. However, it is not indicated how frequently this will occur so that students can use the data to determine progress.</p> <p>The application states that students will have access a personalized sequence of instructional content. However, it is not clear how these personalized recommendations will become a part of the ePortfolio or how frequently these recommendations will be updated.</p> <p>The application describes accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career- ready graduation requirements. These include making sure all online components are section 508 compliant. UDL will be a part of the proposed program. Self-talk strategies will be taught to high-need students.</p> <p>The primary source of training for students will be teachers. The online learning platform will include virtual technical assistance and support to students. The district will provide online support and technical assistance through the Information Technology Service Support Center.</p> <p>The application includes many components of a high-quality plan for improving learning by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. Three key goals have been established to address this criterion. Ten activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goals. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.</p> <p>The ten activities identified for this section need to be more narrowly defined into discrete tasks with designated responsible parties to ensure that the program can be implemented as proposed. The volume of activities assigned to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning does not seem feasible for one person to successfully implement the proposed activities and components of the program.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Professional development will be delivered in eight core areas: delivering highly-effective personalized instruction; encouraging and assisting students in exhibiting persistence and resilience; measuring student progress toward college- and career-readiness; developing 21st century technological skills in their own practice and in their students; fostering a culture that allows for and encourage participation in communities of practice; working with students to set goals and learning targets and helping students monitor their progress; utilizing ePortfolios and standards-based grading; and providing targeted interventions for high-needs students. These core areas are aligned with the program goals and projects. Professional development will be provided to both educators and school leaders. Educators will learn how to implement the skills. School leaders will learn how to support educators in their practice.

Achievement Unit (AU)/Leadership Unit (LU) Opportunities are units of credit that can be earned through participation in vetted professional development activities. Teacher and principal evaluation systems are a critical source of guidance in determining appropriate activities. Following evaluation, individuals are informed of areas of strength and opportunities for growth and can then select AU/LU opportunities in areas in which they need additional work in order to increase effectiveness.

The technology platform and ePortfolios will provide actionable information to help educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. Additional support will be provided through City Schools' Teacher Support Services, professional development, and support materials provided by the technology partners.

Many resources will be made available to educators as a part of the proposed program through communities of practice as well as the AU/LU program.

The application does not describe what tools will be available to create new resources.

The application does not describe process or tools that will be used to match student needs with specific resources.

The proposed program will provide educators with the tools to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

The teacher and school leader evaluation systems provide information about strengths and areas in need of improvement. Individuals can then select professional development opportunities in areas in which they need additional work in order to increase effectiveness for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

Participating school leaders and school leadership teams will participate in Communities of Practice, Leadership Unit opportunities, Instructional Leadership Teams, and Ongoing Executive Director training. Instructional Leadership Team trainings will focus on building skills for measuring student progress toward college- and career-readiness. The ILT will use data to help Communities of Practice track and monitor their practice in order to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance on closing achievement gaps.

The application includes a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. One key goal has been established to address this criterion. Eleven activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goal. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.

The Executive Director of Teaching and Learning position has been tasked with numerous responsibilities. It does not seem feasible that one person could successfully accomplish the designated responsibilities that are assigned as a part of the proposed program.

The implementation plan for integrating the activities listed is not clear. The applicant does not provide a comprehensive, coherent plan describing how the proposed professional development component will function. It is not clear how participating teachers will have the time to complete all of the tasks expected of them in addition to completing the professional development requirements.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

City Schools has a highly de-centralized district office to shift authority and resources to the school level.

Each school can choose from one of eight options for start and end times based on what best suits school needs. Schools

organize their own schedules, classes, and teacher assignments in order to maximize success for the school.

Schools have the authority to make school-level personnel decisions and create unique staffing models. Beyond fulfilling district staffing requirements, schools have autonomy over personnel decisions, including defining the roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators in the school.

The amount of money schools receive is directly tied to their students, calculated with funding models based on per pupil allocations.

The district policy requires that students be graded on proficiency rather than on course completion, seat time, or behavioral indicators. This allows students to move ahead to a subsequent grade or course if they are able to demonstrate mastery.

Course scheduling at middle and high school levels allows students to double up on courses and progress through classes required for high school graduation at a rapid pace.

Dual enrollment is also offered to City Schools students.

Using UDL guidelines and principles in the development or revision of curriculum will result in each standard including a variety of options for students to demonstrate mastery and will provide venues for students to personalize instruction and progress at their own pace.

Schools are currently permitted to allow students to re-attempt demonstrations of mastery in order to progress in a course. Policy allows for re-takes on comparable assessments. However, the proposal does not describe how this will be incorporated into the proposed program.

Each school has a Student Support Team that works to ensure that appropriate interventions and supports are provided for each student in need. Supports will be provided for ELL, SWD, and struggling learners. They will have the opportunity to receive extra services in small group work and individualized instruction.

The application includes a clear description of a high-quality plan. The plan provides concise descriptions of activities that support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. Three key goals have been established to address this criterion. Three activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goal. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Students and educators will be able to access learning content, learning resources, and student performance data. Families who do not have internet access at home will be able to access tablet devices after school hours. The proposed program will make student data accessible through mobile devices.

Staff will be trained on adding new websites as allowed sites so students can access them through the district filter.

Educators will receive district level professional development on using the technology platform for instructional purposes.

Students will receive the bulk of their training from teachers. Students will also be able to access online support.

Families will receive technical support through Teacher Support Services during back-to-school nights and technology open houses.

Online support and technical assistance are provided for online resources.

Online screencasts will be available during the rollout of the platform.

City Schools will create the ePortfolios in such a way that they will be interoperable with other City Schools data systems. Data from ePortfolios will be able to be exported in an open data format.

District systems are currently interoperable. All future systems to be introduced as a part of the proposed program will be interoperable.

The applicant provided evidence of a high-quality plan to support implementation of this component of the proposed project. The LEA and school infrastructure will support personalized learning by ensuring that stakeholders have access and technical support for content, tools, and other learning resources in and out of school.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A third-party evaluator will be hired to conduct evaluation which will include an implementation study, an impact study, and an efficiency study.</p> <p>The application includes 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. Three key goals have been established to address this criterion. Five activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goals. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. One key goal has been established to address this criterion. Five activities with corresponding deliverables and responsible parties have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goal. Rationale is provided for each of the activities.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes ambitious yet achievable performance measures with annual targets for required performance measures.</p> <p>No evidence is provided that the applicant-proposed performance-measure of the student version of the School Survey is a valid or reliable measures of program implementation or success.</p> <p>The application includes the rationale for selecting each measure.</p> <p>The application describes how each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan.</p> <p>The application describes how the proposed program will review and improve each measure over time if it is insufficient to measure the progress of implementation.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes how each of the three studies to be conducted will evaluate the effectiveness of the investment of Race to the Top grant resources.</p> <p>The application includes 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. Three key goals have been established to address this criterion. Five activities have been identified to help the applicant achieve the key goals. Rationale is provided for each of the activities. Deliverables are identified for each activity. Responsible parties are identified for the implementation of each activity.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget identifies all funds that will support the project.</p> <p>The proposed budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>The proposed budget provides a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources and identification of one-time investments versus ongoing operational costs.</p> <p>There is a plan for strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application does not present a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant states that the district will implement a sustainability plan. The Governing Board will deliver funding/sustainability plan by June 2014. While this indicates that the applicant intends to try to identify continued financial support for the proposed program, it does not meet the definition of a high-quality plan.</p> <p>The applicant states that potential sources of funding to be pursued will include in-kind contributions from district agencies and schools, private philanthropic sources, Title I and Title II, sections 6111 and 6112 of the ESEA, US Department of Education research grants, and local LEA sources. These in-kind funds are not guaranteed nor is there any indication that these potential sources have been contacted about providing financial support.</p> <p>The applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget by convening a grant planning meeting of the RTT-D Governing Board.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a description of partnerships. Partnerships are with a variety of community organizations.</p> <p>The applicant identifies six population-level desired results that align with the broader RTTT-D proposal. Desired results include educational outcomes and family/community supports.</p> <p>The applicant has identified how each partnership will track the selected indicators.</p> <p>The applicant identified how it will use data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students.</p> <p>The application describes specific strategies that will be implemented to scale the model beyond participating students.</p> <p>The applicant has identified how the partnerships will improve results over time.</p> <p>The applicant describes how each partnership will integrate education and other services for participating students.</p> <p>The application describes how the proposed partnerships will build the capacity of staff in participating schools to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership; identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant; create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address</p>		

the individual needs of participating students and support improved results; engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs; and routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

The application describes desired results for students. The partnerships identified correlate to the ambitious and achievable performance measures identified in the proposal.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses 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 or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; 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.

Total	210	191
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