Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0053GA-1 for Bibb County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

It is to a **limited extent** that the applicant provided a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.

The applicant in this proposal did **NOT** provide a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The vision proposed was weak with obscurities. The single statement addressing the vision under applicant's approach to implementation was "the vision of the BCSD is to develop a highly trained staff and an engaged community dedicated to educating each student for a 21st Century, multi-ethnic, global economy." Even though this district has had a track record of obtaining 2 major grants RTTT-D 2011 and the SEA RT3 the vision was not sustained and addressed specifically throughout the proposal. In essence, the vision was mentioned at the start and not mentioned thereafter. Interestingly, strategies for developing highly trained staff were mentioned as well as ways to encourage community engagement. Noteworthy is the fact that no supporting details were furnished regarding the latter part of the vision to educate each child for 21st Century, multi-ethnic, global economy.

(a) The evidence provided indicates that Bibb County School District (BCSD) was awarded funding to work in the 4 core educational assurances. These core educational assurances were not examined or referred to. The limited vision postulated did not address the vision guided by the 4 educational assurances. With no indication as to how the 4 educational assurances were built on, the arguments postulated were not grounded nor supported in this criterion of the application.

(b) A clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating students was not provided because of the lack of a vision to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan envisioned.

(c) A limited view of what classroom experiences would be like for students, and teachers participating was evidenced. For example the narrative indicated that students would be engaged in rigorous learning opportunities. This was not substantiated with rigorous teaching and learning experiences for all students. This lack of clear information resulted in a partial or limited view versus a full some view.

Overall, the vision presented was **weak** an **inadequate**. The vision was not 'visible' throughout the proposal. Hence, it was to a very limited extent that the vision was presented. As a result, a score in the low-range was earned.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It was to a **fair extent** that the applicant explained the approach to implementation.

As written, the current applicant's approach to implementation of its reform proposal was **vague** as well as **insufficient**.

(a) The description of the process that the applicant used to select schools to participate was **limited**. The evidence put forth was **weak.** For example, it was stated that due to low performance and the high poverty rate of 79.69%, all BCSD schools would participate in the initiative. However, this was contradicted later on when it was evidenced that the special needs pre-kindergarten and 3 behaviorally based alternative schools were exempted. Missing from the narrative was a **justification** of why these schools were excluded. For district reform to be effective and sustainable, students must have equal opportunity to benefit from interventions. These schools catering to students with special needs were all "left behind" in this application. Based on the widening achievement gap. These special schools generally have the greatest needs for helping students succeed. Therefore, excluding this subgroup would greatly hamper these students from having a chance at succeeding academically.

(b) A specific listing of 40 schools was tabulated as evidence. There were 1,007 educators identified would serve the students in the district.

(c) The total number of students to be served is approximately 24,400 from pre-K through 12th grade. It was not clear whether or not the students from the special schools that were exempted from this proposal were factored in this approximated total. The number of student from low-income families to be served is high based on the poverty rate of 79.69% living below the poverty line. This means if the school district receives the grant the impact could be great in this community having such a high poverty rate. However, leaving out the special schools would further lessen any potential impact.

Whereas some information was provided in this criterion to address applicants approach to implementation, important **evidence** missing. This has resulted in this criterion earning in the mid-range score. To some degree, a somewhat meaningful description of the need to change how instruction is delivered in BCSD was provided. With the changes in content delivery methods and pedagogical practices, the applicants justified the shift made at BCSD from teacher-centered approach to the student -entered approach. Part of the reasons for applying for these funds was to help facilitate a personalized learning system that would be responsive to the current needs of students served at BSCD.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

It was to a **fair extent** that the applicant explained the district's approach to reform and change.

The description of how the school district would scale up the reform and having it translated into meaningful reform was detailed. According to the applicants, the scaling-up would be achieved through: students becoming self-regulated; strengthened community partnerships; having wireless hotspots in the classroom; and online testing. This answer does not completely and clearly outline in specific and measurable terms how scaling-up of the initiative beyond the school district would be accomplished. There was no logic model or theoretical underpinning evidenced in this proposal.

Due to the multiple missing data points for this criterion, a mid-range score was earned. Benchmark goals were mentioned to how they would be accomplished. Some of the activities to be undertaken were described but not the fullest extent. This narrative did not meet the criterion of being a high-quality plan. Rationales were provided in some areas but lacking in others; deliverables were not clearly explained; and timelines were not adequate. Overall, because of the obscure vision, there was no anchoring of the ideas in a coherent and cohesive manner.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It was to a **fair extent** that the applicant explained the LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes.

There were several manageable goals outlined for improving student learning outcomes.

(a) Performance on the Criterion Referenced Competency (CRC) test for grades 3-8 was clearly outlined. For all subgroups and increase of 11% is hoped for. This would involve small incremental increases each year that seems realistic. For change to be effected, one has to seek to build on small steps incrementally over-time. The applicant made a realistic judgment showing there was a keen understanding that student performance on the CRC would take time to show improvement.

(b) A decrease in achievement gap that stands at 10 to 11 points difference also is anticipated. The goal is to steadily narrow this gap in all tested subject areas across ethnic subgroups. This is an **ambitious** plan. In terms of **achievability**, the evidence was not there to make such a judgment. What was missing was the projected length of time it would take to close such a wide gap. No mention is made about closing the gap for students with special needs. This is the group of students who were EXCLUDED from the interventions planned.

(c) Higher college graduation rates are projected for all subgroups. Blacks have continued to have the lowest graduation rates. It is highly anticipated that by 2017-2018 school year, the graduation rate will be approximately 30% higher than the 2014 graduation rates. This goal seems ambitious and somewhat reasonable, yet no evidence was provided with regards to its achievability. Obtaining a 30% higher graduation rate is utopic based on the lack of documentation indicating how this would be accomplished realistically.

(d) College enrollment is expected to rise when you have more students graduating high school. Hence, the hope of this applicant is that the overall graduation rate can move from 65% to 75% by 2017-2018.

Overall, a medium attempt was made at providing some evidence to support this criterion. Based on the projected student performance on summative evaluations, there is some potential that the achievement gap could be narrowed and could ultimately lead to high graduation rates and higher college enrollment numbers. Overall, the goals are **ambitious and not achievable**. Some evidence was missing, hence, a mid-range score was earned.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

It is to some degree that RCSD has demonstrated a track record of success. Hence, this criterion was scored in the mid-range.

There is a track record of success that was not built on effectively in this application. In 2010, BCSD was one of 23 districts that received RTT-D funds. With these initial funds, BCSD was able to launch many vital initiatives to enhance student learning. Whether these initiatives were sustained is yet to be seen. As a result, the district now wants to build capacity by obtaining new funding to sustain former initiatives and implement new ones. Initiatives being looked at to be sustained include :district-wide professional development trainings; district-wide initiatives that improve achievement; reducing achievement gaps; increasing graduation rates and preparing students for college and careers.

(a) Activities to improve student-learning outcomes include having a blended-calendar year. Each school extends the school day by adding 30-40 minutes; focusing on intnse reading intervention—allowing specific students to be easily identified and targeted to get personalized help with managing their school work; forming collaborative learning communities designed to help students work with and help each other.

(b) In the lowest performing schools there was evidence of early initiatives working that has resulted in advances in student learning achievement. Specifically this is evidenced in higher test scores in 2013 when compared to 2012.

(c) Student data has been made available in the form of report cards. There is frequent and continuous student assessment made available through AIMS monitor student progress and the results are filtered to parents, teachers and administrators.

What was not clearly expressed is whether or not parents and teachers when informed about student progress utilized the data in ways to improve participation, instruction and services.

In sum, the applicant demonstratrated some degree of a clear track record of success. Because there were gaps in the explanation, a **mid-range** score was earned.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is to some extent that BCSD has demonstrated evidence of increasing transparency in the processes, practices and investments. Hence, a mid-range score was earned. The evidence points to the fact that Bibb County School District (BCSD) maintains a district website that is accessible to anyone with internet. The actual website was provided for anyone to access. From the narrative the applicant stated that the salaries are public information that can be obtained from the state's website known as "Open Georgia." A revenue analysis and the teacher salary scale were provided on tables. In keeping with the information requested in this criterion, this added information did not help to provide a clear process of transparency.

Missing from the narrative was clear evidence of the actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff; the actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and the actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. There was no mention of the applicant publishing the salaries anywhere else such as the print media. This action would clearly increase the transparency of the processes. With only partial information, this criterion has earned a mid-range score.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

It is to a low extent to which the LEA had demonstrated a clear context for implementation. Working with Georgia's Department of Education was evidence as one way of partnering with an external agency. Due to this partnership, BCSD will be able to create their own next generation of assessments in 2014-2015. This activity demonstrates some degree of autonomy. However, this is futuristic. There is no high-quality plan in place that would convey that BCSD has the capacity to create this assessment. Hence, much value was not added to the proposal.

Clearly missing from the narrative was further evidence to support successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments at BCSD. **Scant** mention was made of Georgia's monitoring plan. This plan was described as including detailed feedback and assessments on the quality of implementation. However, this statement was not clarified or supported to strengthen the state'scontexct for implementation. Furthermore, information was provided in this section addressing: rigorous academic standards; data systems to improve instruction; great teacher/great leader program; and turning around the lowest achieving schools.This information was not explained in a manner that supported the states context for implementation. Thus, this section of the proposal was weak with insuffucient docmentation of specifically how the BCSD would apporach the state context for implementation of the personalized learning environment.

With such **scant** documentation, a low range score was earned for the narrative advanced regarding the state context for implementation of the proposed personalized learning environment.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It is to some extent that the applicant has laid out a case for meaningful stakeholder engagement and support. Throughout the application, one could not "feel" or clearly "tell" that great emphasis was placed on getting stakeholders engaged for this grant activity from the outset. Even the tone of the 7 support letters were low not conveying conviction for implementing personalized learning environment to benefit the students at BSCD. There were very few stakeholders who sent in letters of support BSCD's initiative. Furthermore, there is no description of how students, teachers and families were selected and/or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. What was clearly documented was stakeholder input with the strategic planning in prior years.

There was no indication of LEAs using collective bargaining or not. Hence, no judgment could be made. No evidence was provided to show if 70% of the teachers agreed to this initiative.

The 7 scant letters of support were not from a wide-range of stakeholders. The stakeholders sending in lettters of support were: included Noticeably missing from the support letters were the schools themselves that will be served as well as institutions of higher education.

Because the response to the narrative in this section of the application was scant only a low-range score was earned.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The overall response to this section of the narrative was mediocre. Elements of a high quality plan were absent. Hence, a mid-range score was earned. Learning is ensured by way of the district using rigorous academic standards. Proficiency targets are in place to expand the capacity and development of all the students to be served (EXCEPT the special needs schools). This is important because the reform initiative is all about improving student leaning for success. Evidence further suggest that process performance is closely monitored by LEA partnership. In the bid to foster collaboration, a continuous improvement process is underway. Teachers and counselors will work with the students to identify learning activities that are developmentally appropriate. Some mechanics are in place to provide training and support to

students.

The approach to learning was not clearly demonstrated as being empowering and engaging for all learners. Missing from the narrative was evidence of how students would be motivated to understand what that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their future goals. This was not explained in the context of teacher or parents.

Very weak mention was made of how students will identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and/or career readiness standards or requirements.

Some information was provided regarding how students would be involved in deep learning experiences that are in their area academics. One point of clarification needed at this juncture is the fact that documentation indicated that students will be engaged in academic learning experiences. Not deep learning experiences that are in their area of interest. Furthermore, learning experiences will be available through the: creation of credit flexibility in multiple educational settings; digital portfolios; online course work for all grades; digital learning communities and blended learning–Bring your own device. These strategies would work on paper, however, would not be beneficial in this initiative because they are not in keeping with the project goals. For example, having online coursework for all students would not be feasible in this initiative. There were 387 ELA students being served speaking 23 different languages and 2,358 students having a disability. Giving all students online coursework would be contrary to the personalized learning environment.

It is to some extent that the students at BCSD have exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives. In his regard, there are is a diverse student body especially as it relates to ethnic diversity with 23 different languages spoken. However, the applicant did not elucidate whether or not the faculty were diverse. Also missing was any mention of providing different context and perspectives for the students to benefit from.

Missing from the narrative was clear evidence pointing to how students would master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting and teamwork. Vague mention was made of students having the opportunity to work with each other on selected projects. No mention was made whether or not this opportunity spanned all grade levels.

Whereas an elaborate timeline of personalized opportunities for teachers and students no mention was made of specifically how students will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable achievement individual learning goals.

In this section the applicant did not directly address how will there be regular feedback to provide updated individual student data to determine progress. However, mention was made of students' ability to be reassessed as well as access to Saturday classes and summer school. This implies there is a feedback mechanism. However, this feedback mechanism was not explained in the narrative.

Ongoing feedback based on students' personalized learning recommendations was not addressed explicitly. There was no account of the types of accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to ensure they are on track toward meeting standards or requirements. Furthermore, the mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning was inadequate.

Overall, this section was weak and not well addressed. As a result, a mid-range score was earned by the applicant.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**7**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The overall quality of response to this criterion was fair**,** thus, earning a score in the mid-range. The argument was fair showing an understanding of what it takes to support effective teaching and leading. A **somewhat detailed** plan has been laid out for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment for students to graduate college and career ready.

There are multiple approaches that DCSD has outlined. Description of some of these strategies follows:

Engaging educators in training so that each student's needs will be met to ensure college and career readiness will be accomplished by the year-long training for teachers at DCSD designed to engage and support technology integration. The Teacher and Leadership Key evaluation will be used to provide feedback on observations carried out in the schools. How the content and instruction of facilitate student engagement will be adapted was not addressed in the narrative. The measuring of student success was evidenced to be done using the Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and Performance Matters data system. The data generated will be used to inform educators and student of the progress they are making or the lack thereof. Hence, interventions can be put in place early to help students who may be struggling. Strategies for improving teacher and principal practice and effectively using feedback loop was addressed scantily. The evidence points to the district having a recruiting and retaining officer who is responsible for recruiting highly trained faculty.

In sum, this criterion has earned a mid-range score because only some evidence was provided showing how students would be prepared for college through the teaching and learning processes. The plan advanced does not constitute a high-quality plan. Information addressing how hard-to-staff schools as well as hard-to-staff content areas including special education was not evidenced in the plans. For any plan to be effective across the school district, these areas must be adequately addressed. Again, the application fell short of providing vital information needed to support a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

It is to a **fair** extent that the applicant has outlined the policies and practices in place that facilitate personalized learning. Hence, a score in the mid-range was earned.

(a) Organization:

A **fair** description was provided regarding the scope and structure of DCSD. This is because from the narrative, a **fair** focus on teaching and learning was evident. There is collaborative monthly leadership meetings held for administrators, directors and curriculum coordinators. No mention was made regarding the size and scope of the business office teams

(b) Provide school leadership teams with resources:

There is a school leadership team in place designed to go across the district. Leadership meetings are held monthly and resource allocation also is addressed at this forum.

(c) Opportunity to progress was not addressed in the proposal.

(d) Opportunity to demonstrate mastery:

The opportunity to demonstrate mastery is addressed in this section of the application. Students participate in the state assessments such as grades 3-8 CRCT and End –of –grade test at a given time frame. Virtual learning classes awere indicated as being offered. Who these online classess were offered to was not articulated. There also is opportunity for credit recovery, that helps to expand opportunities for students who did not succeed the first time thy took a course. recommendation

(e) Learning resources:

The resources provided are accessible and adaptable to meet the express needs of each student. It was **explicitly** documented that students with disabilities as well as students for whom English is a second language were included. There are 387 ELA students being served speaking 23 different languages. This is a challenge to the teachers in the school districts to meet the needs of all the various language learners. In addition over 2,358 students with disabilities are served in this school district. Furthermore, over 1,600 students were identified as being gifted and talented at BCSD.

Appropriate assistive technology was indicated as being provided. Students with disabilities do have access to the regular technology with the appropriate adaptability. **Evidence** is provided indicating that the district provides technical support to the various constituencies in BCSD.

The evidence provided in this section of the narrative was fair and the narrative earned a mid-range score.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is to some extent that the narrative outlines how LEA and school infrastructure supports project implementation. Evidence shows that there is access to learning resources. Having these learning resources wil ensure that all students have access to the Internet and virtual learning tools when they are at school. Technical training and support is provided district wide so that all students have an equal chance of benefiting from such. The data warehouse mines the data to provide detailed and individualized feedback on each student in the district. Whereas students and teachers do have access to much of the technology systems, parents have limited access. They can only send and receive phone call and e-mails. No mention was made regarding the ability for parents to and students to export their information in an open data format. BCPS has an interoperable data system in place as mentioned in the narrative. However, effective ways in using this data system were not explained. This was not a high-quality plan because the data provided was not complete. Hence, a mid-range score was received.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A high-quality plan was not provided for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback in this application. Hence, a **low score** was earned in this section. The grant monitoring platform was identified as the eBoard program that will also support communication and collaboration among partners. However, **concrete** ways in which the eBoard would be used were not clearly outlined in the narrative.

How the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments in areas such as professional development, technology, and staff was not clear. Mention was made of how student data would be collected and managed. However, the methodology to be used was not clearly discussed. The gaps and sparseness of the information provided made it difficult to get a true and clear understanding the continuous improvement process plan to be followed at BCSD. Because of a lack of clarity and focus in this section, a low-range score was earned.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A fairly high-quality plan for on going communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders was provided in this section of the application. Specifically, this plan clearly evidenced the use of the Welcome Center designed to provide parents with knowledge regarding Internet safety and student instructions. The district's website shares information and announcements; the district telecommunication tool to phone home and e-mail families also is a way to stay connected with stakeholders. Employees have access to the e-mail used in the district. There is a written plan for communicating with stake-holding groups and getting them involved and engaged in the school districts activities, hence, the goal for communication was ambitious and achievable. In addition, a realistic timeline was presented for communicating with stake holders in a timely and meaningful way. The deliverables envisioned were achievable. The personnel in place to effect the communication process also was realistic.

Clearly missing from the narrative is any mention of the local news media involved with communicating information with stake-holding

groups.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

It is to **some** extent that the applicant addressed the performance measures to be accomplished in this section of the nattative. The applicant provided 9 performance measures with rationales. The requirement was 12-14 performance measures. These performance measures are achievable in the specified grade-band. There is a degree of ambitiousness with regards to the performance measures. Goals and objectives were listed but were not achievable. However, neither the ambitiousness nor the achievability was addressed in this narrative. The data provided on the tables were incomplete, making it difficult to make an informed judgment regarding the performance measures.

No mention has been made regarding how performance measures were selected and why. Furthermore, no mention was made of how the applicant would collect, analyze and disseminate data. There was no discussion addressing how the applicant plans to review and improve measure over time in an attempt to gage implementation.

Overall this narrative regarding performance measures was very **weak** and **inconclusive**. Hence, a low range score was obtained.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

A high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of this grant was **NOT** provided. There was no specific subheading addressing this important criterion of the proposal. Cursory mention was made with regards to hiring an external evaluator who will work closely with the program director. No mention was made of the type of evaluation model that will be followed or the activities to be carried out. From the outset, the plan it was lacking in a clear and concise vision as well as achievable goals. Therefore, no judgment can be successfully made regarding the reasonability of benchmark goals. In addition, scant mention has been made of the activities to be undertaken. Some rationales were mentioned throughout the application that seemed reasonable whereas others are not. Timelines are few and the deliverables were not guided by clear goals.

Because of the scant information provided in this section of the application, a low-range score was earned.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The overall **quality** of this response to the budget criterion is rated in the mid range. This is because there were gaps in applicant's budget inclusive of the budget narrative and the tables making it difficult to clearly understand the entire budget proposal.

First, the applicant identified funds that will support the project. Over the 4 year period a total of $29,978,846.80 is requested. Based on the proposal, this figure seems fairly reasonable. Matching funds from the school district will be $368,600. The matching funds will be from previously awarded RTTT-D funds. Itemized costs for equipment , infrastructure, consultants and assessment/diagnostic instruments were left out of the budget justification. It was confusing why this would be left out even though the BOE policy suggests that purchases under $30,000 needs not be tabled. So, what would be the aggregate cost of all the areas listed above? Such costs could be significant. With no data provided it is difficult to make a clear decision regarding the desirability of the budget advanced. In addition, the proposed budget is **heavily weighed** on investments in technology even though previous grants have been acquired. This begs the issue of the vision for this grant which is to develop highly trained staff and an engaged community dedicated to educating each child for the 21st Century. The budget does not truly reflect the vision.

Second, the overall cost per pupil to be served was not delineated specifically itemizing the cost per pupil. This missing data in the budget conveys that a clear understanding of exactly what is to be spent per pupil is not understood. If the cost per pupil is not understood, it will be difficult to know how to plan for meeting the needs of the students served in BCSD. One time costs were not differentiated from other costs that would recur.

Third, a rationale for investment priorities was difficult to ascertain from the budget narrative. Having evaluated the budget, this information is obscured and not forthcoming. The applicant's budget plan has line items to hire staff and purchase a variety of supplies needed to carry out the outlined projects. Staff members will include: project manager, GLO writers, internal budget/data analysis, external evaluator and technology specialists. Relevant supplies and technology include: mobile carts, contract for performance matters, emotional/behavioral screening instrument, mileage for travel and other general supplies. Even though over $20 million of the $29+ million requested is for technology, the technology needs were not clearly delineated in the narrative. It is not simply about hiring staff and purchasing technology that makes a plan high-quality, rather it is the combination of having the right resources and personnel to execute the plan outlined. In this narrative, elements of a high-quality plan were missing as it relates to timelines for implementation, realistic outcomes and measurable performance measures.

Overall, this narrative earned a mid-range score because the budget information did not clearly outline where the money would be spent and how it would be spent. The money to be spent also is not clearly justifiable because where the bulk of the money will be spent (technology) is not a main feature of the project's vision.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is to a low extent that this criterion was addressed adequately in this narrative. Hence, a low-range score was obtained. First, sustainability of project goals was not linked to the narrative provided. Second, how partners were selected in the strategic planning phase was the focus of this section. Third, no mention was made of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use the data for

future investments. Fourth, no mention was made of evaluating the improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform post-grant budget.

In essence, the elements of a high-quality plan were clearly missing. From the outset, a clear vision was missing to guide the plans for a personalized learning system at BCSD. Furthermore, key/benchmark goals were not provided. The plan does include activities to be undertaken to provide a personalized learning environment. The narrative fell short in that the applicant did not prove without a reasonable doubt that improvements in productivity and outcomes will be evaluated in a timely fashion during and after the grant activity period. Due to the gaps and missing data, a low-range scored was earned.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**2**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The competitive Preference Priority was not met in this application. The applicant proposed having $368,600 of funds from other sources that were not identified as coming from public or private sources. Mention was made of Faith-based Organizations, the Orange Duffel Bag Project and Kennesaw State University all partnering with Bibb to provide support at multiple levels for the student. Specifically, these partnerships did not clearly state how the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the high-needs students in the school district.

First, the applicant did, to a limited extent demonstrate how the resources they would receive from the partnerships would benefit the students served. For example, Kennesaw State University would assist in providing program accessibility and reasonable accommodation for students with disability, so they could ensure students achieve the goal of College and Career readiness. However, this partnership would not have any effect on the overall plan. This is because all the special needs schools were EXEMPTED from taking part in the proposed initiative. In essence, this partnership activity would contradict the evidence of serving special needs students.

Second, the application did not coherently nor comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. Throughout the application this was missing.

Third, Absolute Priority 1 was not met.

Fourth, the plan advanced was **weak**. This application from Bibb lacks evidence that support its own vision and goals. This plan is poorly designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. Furthermore, it was inadequate not providing evidence of having the correct strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and/or career-ready standards. This applicant has not provided evidence that can effectively accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. No strategic plans are in place to show increase in the effectiveness of educators.

Fifth, this application was of a low-quality, in that, it does not clearly shows how achievement gaps across student groups would be decreased neither does it shows unequivocally how the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers would be increased.

Sixth, the applicant did mention that The Orange Duffel Bag Foundation provides coaching that helps homeless and highly mobile youth to achieve. What was missing was how this program operates. It was not clear whether or not this was a before or after school program.

In sum, because of all the limitations outlined in the narrative above, this application did **NOT** meet the Competitive Preference Priority. Hence, a low-range score was earned. Timelines were obscured; measurable performance measures were inadequately explained and an unclear students learning outcomes. So, unfortunately, the applicant did not provide a coherent and comprehensive narrative that built on the core educational assurances. There were several gaps and inconsistencies throughout the application. The four educational assurances were not addressed with substantive evidence. From the outset of the proposal, the four educational assurances were not used to anchor project activities. Hence, the Competitive Preference Priority was not met.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Absolute Priority 1 was **NOT** met by the applicant. This application was not written in a coherent or comprehensive manner. From the outset, no mention was made of how the district would build on the core educational assurance areas. The personalized learning environment envisioned would not be designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators. Goals and objectives were vague hence not aligned with college and/or career-ready standards. This in turn would hamper students' progress to meet graduation requirements. In addition, the applicant did not clearly outline and defend how student achievement would be deepened or accelerated. Few measures were in place to show students' academic needs would be met. However, having **EXCLUDED** all special schools in the district from the initiative would leave that sub-population behind. Thus, the full academic needs of each student would not be met. Furthermore only routine professional development activities were identified to increase the effectiveness of educators. Teacher evaluation would be in place help with teacher quality. A convincing argument was not advanced outlining how student access to the most effective educators would be expanded. Mention was made or decreasing achievement gaps across student groups and increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and/or careers. However, the strategies and mechanisms were not in place to ensure that students would indeed succeed. The applicant did not comprehensively or coherently address the key elements for an innovative and transformational reform in the school district. Hence, the Absolute Priority 1 was **NOT** met.

Total	210	78

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0053GA-2 for Bibb County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For A(1)(a) the applicant demonstrates that the district has adopted appropriate standards because in 2012, the district adopted the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in math and language arts. Furthermore, the district has made efforts to prepare its teachers for the implementation of these standards because it provided all teachers in grades Pre-K through twelfth grade with training in the CCGPS as well as with opportunities to work collaboratively across content areas in planning at least one unit.

The district has also focused on making sure the CCGPS are implemented with fidelity because district leaders worked during the 2012-13 school year to help instructors develop “instructional practices aligned with a standards-based learning environment,” and expert consultants are “involved in job embedded professional development in each school” throughout the 2013-14 school year. The district justifies these efforts because it explains that teachers need to strengthen their knowledge and skills to “effectively engage 21st Century learners.”

The application further strengthens its explanations of how it has implemented standards because it presented those teachers who do not have content-specific CCGPS with trainings in literacy integration such as those that require non-textbook reading selections, Socratic seminars, and argumentative writing.

The applicant is not as far along in implementing data systems to improve instruction, but the narrative provides reasonable evidence that the district is working towards doing so. For example, the district used its original RT3 funds to purchase a data management and assessment delivery platform in February 2013. It is feasible that the platform will support the district’s efforts because the platform will track important data related to student achievement, behavior, and attendance.

The district also demonstrates that it is extending the importance of effective assessment across all subjects because it is requiring teachers to develop common assessments for their courses to measure student growth. The application provides sound evidence that these “growth assessments” will provide teachers with important information because teachers are required to administer pre- and post-tests a 30% improvement rate as the goal.

The district demonstrates its comprehensive approach to developing great teachers and leaders because it has implemented the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES). The district effectively documents the role these systems play in its vision because it provides in its appendix a detailed timeline for the 2013-14 school year as well as performance reference sheets for both systems.

The applicant has additional support in its efforts to develop great leaders because district leaders are evaluated according to the Leader Assessment on Professional Standards (LAPS) method in conjunction with the LKES. Using this combination of assessment tools will increase the likelihood of improved student learning because the evaluation of building leaders takes into account the overall student growth at the leaders’ individual schools.

Finally, the applicant provides convincing evidence that its vision incorporates efforts to turn around its lowest achieving schools because it has utilized RT3 grant funds to provide these schools with academic and graduation coaches and to develop summer programs for its lowest-achieving high schools and their specific feeder schools.

To address A(1)(b), the applicant appropriately demonstrates its “approach to change” because it provides an effective graphic and a convincing narrative that outline a progression of “projects” that incorporate the four core educational assurance areas. Projects 1 and 2 are particularly well-supported because Project 1 addresses personalized instruction through the use of rigorous standards and assessments to measure student achievement and ability (core educational area 1), and Project 2 then takes the personalized data created during Project 1 to “look at the whole child when making instructional decisions” (core educational area 2). However, Project 3 (a 1:1 Initiative) is the least convincing since it inadequately demonstrates how it will address the core educational area of turning around the lowest-achieving schools (core educational area 4) because the narrative only vaguely references how the use of 1:1 technology will directly benefit these schools in particular. However, the narrative does provide reasonable evidence that the use of 1:1 technology will generally enhance personalized learning because it incorporates appropriate rationale (including that “technology is also useful when scaffolding lessons") and achievable goals (such as providing students with “the freedom to organize their new-found knowledge in creative and unique ways").

The application then effectively explains how the final component of these projects is the third core educational area (recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals) because the narrative convincingly bookends the other three core educational areas with the importance of developing teachers and leaders into student-centered educators who value “looking at data to modify instruction.”

A(1)(c) provides some reasonable examples of what the classroom experience will look like for students and teachers because it lists some of the ways the district addresses personalized learning environments in the classroom. For example, the district provides extended learning opportunities in the evenings and over weekends and breaks for students who need support beyond the typical school day. However, the chart that the applicant includes lacks detail because it does not provide sufficient evidence or effective descriptions. Instead, the chart simply lists items that relate to classroom experiences (such as extended learning opportunities, flipped classrooms, and mobile computer labs). As a result, the narrative does not clearly demonstrate the extent to which students’ and teachers’ classroom experiences relate to the district’s reform vision.

The application scores in the medium range for this selection criteria because while it does establish a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, it fails to delineate to the fullest extent possible how it will implement data systems to improve instruction and how it will reform the classroom experience.

Score: 6

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application clearly articulates which schools will be included in the implementation of its proposal because the narrative for this section explains that all schools will

participate with the exception of a special needs pre-kindergarten and three behaviorally-based alternative schools. Additionally, the application includes a comprehensive chart that contains each participating school's name and level (PK-5, 6-8, or 9-12)

The application also includes a brief description of how it determined that all of its schools will participate. The overall determination process is sensible because the district concludes that it should be dedicated to educating each student and that it needs to address challenges faced by all schools in the district since the district's graduation rate (51.34%) and poverty rate (79.69%) are so high. However, the applicant leaves out important determination details because it fails to explain why it excludes the pre-kindergarten and alternative schools.

Most of the relevant data is included in a detailed chart that lists each of the 40 schools. The data in the chart is somewhat incomplete, however, because the chart has blank columns for the total number and percentage of low-income students in the LEA or Consortium. The applicant does, however, state in its opening narrative for this section that the poverty rate is 79.69% across the district, and its overall total indicates that 19,501 out of 24,491 students are low-income. Therefore, one can assume that the relevant columns in the chart would also include these numbers had they been filled out. Otherwise, the data is complete and appropriately consistent. Nearly every school in the district meets the minimum eligibility requirement that more than 40% of its students must be low-income. The clear exception is Springdale Elementary because only 30% of Springdale's students qualify as low-income.

This portion of the application scores in the high range because it offers a reasonable explanation for why it has chosen to include a majority of the district's schools and it provides the requested data for each of the participating schools. However, the applicant does not explain why it did not include all of its schools in the plan.

Score: 8

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included nearly all of its schools in its proposal, and it provides appropriate reasons for why nearly all of the students and schools in the LEA will be included in the plan. However, this section does not directly address how the district might scale up its proposal to implement meaningful reform in those few schools that are not participating. Nevertheless, the application provides a convincing theory that effective personalized learning environments rely on a change in educators' approaches to instruction because the application narrative convincingly describes how teacher-centered approaches and passive students "will no longer work in a rapidly changing, technology driven team centered world." Furthermore, the application justifies the rationale behind its approach to student-centered learning because it soundly argues that "students should be given the means to find the answer, not the answer themselves."

Though the timeline provided by the applicant lacks specific dates or even years, it does provide a thorough rationale for why the timeline accounts for pre- and post-grant periods because it acknowledges that meaningful reforms take time and extended efforts. The activities and deliverables are listed under three columns that account for broad timelines: pre-grant years, the years of the grant, and post-great year.

The application does include a number of achievable goals, such as providing looping opportunities for teachers at all grade levels. Furthermore, the plan takes into account students at all grade levels (and therefore is more likely to effect district-wide reforms) because it reasonably proposes that the efforts carried out in elementary schools "will provide the foundational base for learning, while the work in the middle schools will provide the application level for learning." The applicant then explains that these efforts will carry over into high school because they will culminate in self-regulated learning at the high school level.

The narrative does not address deliverables with sufficient detail because it refers only in passing to such major endeavors as "a collaborative college and career initiative" and an update in "board of education policies regarding instructional delivery." Similarly, the parties responsible for the goals mentioned in this section are almost never indicated. For example, the applicant explains that "community partnerships will be developed" to introduce students to work-force environments, but there is no indication of who will be establishing these community partnerships. When a responsible party is indicated, it is usually in the form of a very general statement such as "the Bibb County School District pledges . . ." As a result, the plan does not contain sufficient evidence to indicate that the activities will be implemented effectively, which in term lessens the extent to which this is a high-quality plan.

Overall, this section of the application scores in the medium range because the applicant articulates reasonable theories and proposes achievable goals that can be scaled up to support district-wide reform. Similarly, the inclusion of comprehensive timelines demonstrates the achievability of these goals. However, the applicant does not effectively demonstrate how it will put these theories into action or achieve the goals because the deliverables and responsible parties have not been documented to the fullest extent possible

Score: 5

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In this section the applicant presents charts that include relevant grade information and some subgroup information for each of the areas of A(4). However, the applicant only includes data for subgroups based on ethnicity. Therefore, it does not provide relevant data for at least one of its identified subgroups because the applicant has documented elsewhere that the district has a poverty rate of 79.69%.

In the first part of its response to A(4)(a), the applicant demonstrates ambitious goals, some of which will be more achievable than others. While the goals are based on Georgia Department of Education College and Career Readiness Index Proficiency rates, early goals will present a challenge for the applicant because of its students' current low levels of achievement. For example, the Asian and white students have achievement levels for 2011-12 and 2012-13 that are close enough to the district's goals for 2013-14 to make the current goals achievable because all of the scores are within 2-3 percentage points of each other. In contrast, the achievement levels for black and Hispanic students over the last two years are between 8 and 10 percentage points away from the 2013-14 goals. As a result, the goals for black and Hispanic students are not as achievable.

To demonstrate its goals for performance on summative assessments, the applicant first includes charts of Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) data from its 2011-12 and 2012-13 years as baselines for the overall group and for five subgroups (Asian, black, Hispanic, "Two or more," and white) in grades 3-8. The CRCT test scores are for math and English Language Arts. The applicant effectively demonstrates growth because its status is determined by the "percent proficient and above" while growth is determined by the percent proficient.

For the second part of its response to A(4)(a), the applicant presents a detailed chart with summative assessment data based on End-of-Course-Tests (EOCT) in 9th grade literature and Math II. While the literature goals are more appropriate and achievable than the Math II goals, the literature goals are likely still as unachievable as those for the grades 3-8 CRCT tests. These goals will ultimately be more achievable than those for math because at least a majority of all students are currently scoring well above 50% percent. The Math II goals, however, are even more concerning because the most recent levels of achievement are at least 15 points below the first-year goal (for white students) and as many as 20 points below the first-year goal (for Asian and black students). Additionally, only Asian and white students are scoring above 50%. The methods for determining status and growth were also the same as with the CRCT. Again, the applicant effectively demonstrates growth because its

status is determined by the "percent proficient and above" while growth is determined by the percent proficient.

To respond to A(4)(b), the applicant includes data sets for grades 3-8 English/language arts CRCTs and math CRCTs as well as data sets for a 9th grade English literature EOCT and a 10th grade Math II EOCT. The applicant includes data that demonstrates achievement gaps between white students and black students and between white students and Hispanic students because, as it explains, "white students are outperforming other subgroups, with the most significant achievement gaps occurring between Black and Hispanic groups." The gaps are convincing because baseline data matches the data the applicant has included elsewhere in A(4)(b). However, the goals will be similarly challenging for the students to achieve for the reasons previously mentioned.

In A(4)(c) the applicant presents overall graduation rates as well as those for students in the same ethnic subgroups that it has included previously. The overall graduation rate goals at first appear to be reasonable. However, they are skewed by the achievement of the Asian/Pacific Island subgroup because its graduation rate in 2012-13 is 90.91% with the next closest subgroup being white students with a graduation rate of only 62.85%. Additionally, the goals for Asian students are not appropriate because the baseline level is above 90% while the goals for all years of the grant are listed at levels less than 88%. (For example, the graduation rate baseline is 90.91% while the goal for 2013-14 is only 82.6%. Even the goal for 2016-17 is still less than the baseline since it is 87.7%). As with the district's goals elsewhere in this section, the rest of the subgroups are unlikely to achieve the benchmarks since they are already so far behind at the baseline level.

A(4)(d) includes only overall college enrollment data because the narrative states that the Georgia Department of Education does not provide relevant subgroup data and that the district does not track this data either. Furthermore, it only provides a baseline for 2011-12. The overall college enrollment rates are reasonable and should be achievable because the goal for each year's increase is only 2 percentage points. However, without any baseline data for 2012-13, there is not sufficient evidence to determine whether these goals are appropriately ambitious.

The applicant does not address A(4)(e) (the optional postsecondary degree attainment section).

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range because the applicant demonstrates ambitious goals that are equal to or exceed state targets. However, few of these goals will be achievable because the state targets are so far above the district's baseline data.

Score: 6

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**	**8**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In the opening narrative for B(1), the applicant provides a reasonable and appropriate description of its record of success because it presents its moderate improvements in academic performance in relation to the continually widening achievement between the lowest-performing students and those who are meeting academic standards. To document these modest improvements, the district presents focused yet thorough data for recent CRCTs in grades 3-8 and EOCTs in grades 9-12. The data is thorough because the documentation includes a relevant narrative, a graph, and a chart to support its assertions. Students in grades 3-8 have clearly shown small but steady improvements in English language arts, reading, science, and social studies because all three areas show growth that is statistically significant. Similarly, high school students have shown small but steady improvements in American literature and 9th grade literature with increase of 3.1 and 3.6 percentage points, but they have shown even greater levels of growth in Math II (9.1 percentage points), biology (7.8 percentage points), and economics (7 percentage points). The only subject in which students failed to demonstrate significant growth was US history because the students' scores improved only .10 percentage points.

Though the applicant acknowledges that the gaps in achievement continue to grow between low-performing students and students who are meeting state and national proficiency standards, the applicant supplies only anecdotal narration and fails to document relevant data or specifics as evidence of the challenges it faces.

In section B(1)(b), the applicant describes activities and systems (including programs such as Read 180, Systems 44, and "College and Career Pathways) that may lead to ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest-achieving and low-performing schools, but the evidence is lacking because the applicant fails to demonstrate convincingly that these activities and systems have achieved the desired outcomes. For example, the applicant explains that the district was recognized by the AdvancED External Review Team in the Spring of 2013 for its effective use of collaborative learning communities; however, there is no documentation or evidence to support that these efforts particularly benefited persistently low-achieving or low-performing schools. Instead, the applicant provides only a general statement without evidence that "low performing schools have improved students' academic performances."

Section B(1)(c) provides some details about the district's data management systems because it explains that educators will soon be able to utilize Performance Matters and the Online Assessment System (OAS). Additionally, the district uses GKIDS with kindergarteners and AIMS web to monitor the progress of students in grades 1-5. However, the applicant provides very little information about the specifics of these programs or their reporting mechanisms because the applicant limits its commentary to basic descriptions of the programs' primary functions. Parents and students also have access to this information through an internet-based system, but the applicant's explanation of the difference between this internet-based system and the one it names later in the paragraph, which is Infinite Campus, is unclear. Consequently, the applicant has provided only a very basic explanation of the tools it uses to generate and communicate student performance data, and it fails to demonstrate the connection between the availability of this data to appropriate parties and the district's ability to inform instruction and improve participation and services.

The applicant does not offer any evidence of how it makes student performance data available to parents who do not have internet access. It is unlikely that all parents will be able to access the "Parent Portal," especially in a district that has a poverty rate of 79.69%. Therefore, it is very unlikely that all of the parents have access to students performance data unless the district is also offering information using alternative methods, and the district does not address this reality.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. While the applicant demonstrates that it can improve student learning, it is still struggling to close achievement gaps. The systems it uses to make data available to students, educators, and parents is not always effective since it relies on internet availability. As a result, the applicant has not demonstrated to the fullest extent that implemented activities and systems that will lead to ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools.

Score: 8

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not immediately address the level of transparency it practices in relation to expenditures because the first part of the narrative focuses more on how the district disseminates general information. For example, the applicant explains that it uses an automated calling system and a public access channel to share general information or to contact parents in the event of an emergency.

Later in the paragraph, however, the applicant demonstrates an acceptable level of transparency because the applicant explains that it shares all board meeting items

through a Board of Education link because many of these items relate directly to expenditures. The district also presents budget-related information with the public in more direct ways, too, because it advertises its proposed budget in the local paper each year and holds a public hearing to gather public input.

A website maintained by the State of Georgia is the only source for teacher and administrator salary information that the applicant lists, and the applicant does not indicate that this website includes information about staff salaries.

The applicant provides a brief narrative about how it shares budgetary information discussed at board meetings, and the narrative is further supported by a revenue analysis report because the included report presents such specifics as possible net taxes and millage rates.

At the conclusion of this section the district provides a detailed teacher salary schedule which is an effective form of evidence because it shows actual personnel salaries.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. The applicant provides some strong evidence of its efforts to be transparent because it includes relevant narratives and documents. However, it also includes irrelevant information early on in the section and fails to provide information about support staff salaries.

Score: 2

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In section (B)(3), the applicant provides unclear evidence about whether it has the autonomy to implement personalized learning environments according to its proposal because this section includes limited references to the specifics of the district's proposal. Instead, the applicant limits its narration to explaining how state-adopted standards, data systems, and teacher/leader assessment systems will function. For example the first paragraph of five in this section summarizes Georgia's adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the state's recent decision to design its own common assessments instead of working with the PARCC assessment consortium.

The applicant includes only one indirect reference to the independent reforms that the district would like to implement. This reference in the final paragraph provides limited evidence of autonomy because it merely explains that the state will assist the district's lowest-achieving schools once the schools have selected their intervention model of choice. However, any specifics about an intervention model or about innovative reforms go undocumented. Without specifics from the applicant's proposal, the extent to which the LEA will experience successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to turn aourd its lowest-achieving schools is impossible to determine.

In the budget portion of the plan, the applicant actually presents evidence of restrictions imposed by the district's Board of Education that may affect the district's ability to fully implement its plan because the Board of Education requires that "any purchase over $30,000.00 must be brought before the Board of Education as an information item prior to beginning the Request For Proposal (RFP) process." To further detail this requirement, the applicant includes its Board's bids and quotations policies in its appendix, and this appendix item specifies that the policy "shall apply without regard to the source of funding."

The overall score for this section falls in the low range because the applicant provides only sparse evidence that it will have the autonomy to implement personalized learning environments.

Score: 2

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**8**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In section (B)(4), the applicant provides evidence it has involved stakeholders in the development of its 1:1 technology initiative and its blended learning environment, both of which play a critic role in *The Macon Miracle*, which is the district's strategic plan. The narrative for this section explains that educators, business partners, community leaders and members, parents, and students were all part of the collaborative effort; however, there is not much evidence of community involvement in a table provided by the applicant that "demonstrates the correlation between *The Macon Miracle* and the project goals for this grant." This lack of evidence is notable because the table constitutes over six of the eight pages included for this section. Those references to community involvement that are mentioned in the table have more to do with future project activities than with the development of the project itself. For example, one of the goals in the chart is "Partner with parents, community members, and community agencies to strategically align resources to enhance student learning."

Following the chart is a short narrative section that explains that more than 70% of teachers support the 1:1 technology initiative and the blended learning environment. The applicant provides sound evidence that back up these numbers because it includes the results and the survey that generated these percentages. The sample of teachers surveyed is also reasonable because 817 of 1,007 district teachers participated.

Finally, the district includes a reasonable collection of letters of support from members of the community because it presents letters from a retired educator, a parent, a minister, the Dean of Parent and Community Education, and three others.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range because while the applicant has documented community support and has made an effort to involve stakeholders in the process, it has not sufficiently shown how stakeholders have been engaged throughout the development of the proposal.

Score: 8

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 demonstrates evidence in this section to support its plan to appropriately prepare students for college and careers. The applicant demonstrates its approach to helping students understand the importance of learning in relation to success and to helping them identify and pursue learning goals because it focuses on such individual learning options as career pathways and credit flexibility. These examples are effective because advocating that students explore career pathways and allowing students to earn credits in individually significant ways empowers students to take responsibility for their futures regardless of whether they are going to begin college or a career following high school.

C(1) does not effectively address whether students will have access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives, and the applicant does not directly address this required element elsewhere in the plan.

Credit flexibility effectively address (C)(1)(b)(i) because not only might high school students personalize their instructional sequences with flexible options, but middle school or younger students may jump ahead to explore individually appropriate opportunities in the high schools. Furthermore, students will be more likely to be involved in deep thinking as a result of credit flexibility because they will more likely be exploring areas that are of greater interest to them.

The applicant also effectively supports students in their college and career preparation through Teacher as Advisor programs, but the evidence for how this program guarantees “instruction through higher-level knowledge” is sparse. Furthermore, this section of the application references “Ga411 resources”; however, a search through the entire application fails to uncover a definition for or explanation of what these resources are. Because Ga411 resources appear to play a major role in the applicant’s strategies to achieve continuous school improvement, the lack of information about the resources makes this evidence limited in its effectiveness.

To address aspects of (C)(1)(b)(iv), the applicant includes effective strategies that place data at the center of “an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement" because the district includes reasonable proposals to make instructional decisions district-wide. For example, the district plans to employ a statistician to manage data. Furthermore, school leaders will review data on a monthly basis with both staff and district officials.

References in this section to accommodations and strategies for high-need students are ambiguous at best. For example, one of the few places that the applicant addresses ways to keep these students on track and college- and career-ready is a very brief mention of “differentiated instruction with built-in remediation.” The lack of focus on high-need students is notable because the approaches to learning in this section are to benefit high-need students in particular.

The applicant includes elements of a high-quality plan because it addresses them for two goals: creating personalized learning environments and extending "opportunities for graduation and post-secondary preparation." However, the components of a high-quality plan do not extend across all of the subsections of C(1).

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. The applicant provides reasonable approaches to learning and personalized instruction that will engage and empower all learners; however, the support is often not as detailed and thorough as it could be. Furthermore, the applicant includes some elements of a high-quality plan, but it does not fully satisfy this requirement.

Score: 12

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**8**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In C(2) the applicant provides some evidence of ways to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment because it proposes such strategies as using professional learning teams and such activities as analyzing data as often as weekly. However, the applicant provides insufficient evidence of a high-quality plan. For example, in its narrative for C(2)(a), the applicant includes generalities such as the fact that educators will utilize formative and summative assessments; however, the narration provides insufficient evidence that the tasks are grounded in State Standards or that educators will then use the data to improve instruction. Similarly, the applicant's explanation of year-long trainings that support technology integration explain that teachers will learn to use technology to personalize content and instruction, but instead of describing the training methods or explaining how instructors will utilize technology, the applicant only provided examples of the types of technology that students will use (such as Skyping, iPads, and apps.)

This section of C(2) also glosses over how evaluation systems will directly relate to preparing students for college- and career-readiness because the applicant only mentions that evaluation tools will be used and that support will be implemented following evaluation. Addressing educators' abilities to prepare students for colleges and careers is of paramount importance since the focus for all of C(2) is on how the applicant will structure learning, teaching, and leading with only this goal in mind.

In C(2)(b) the applicant does not fully explain how it will employ data management systems because while it does say that educators will "utilize high quality learning resources" to collect and analyze data, it does not demonstrate that teachers will have the support they need to analyze the data, nor does this section address whether teachers will have the tools they need to share resources with each other and to match student needs.

For C(2)(c), the applicant provides some evidence that the district will provide educators with appropriate resources and training because it articulates that the district will use information obtained from evaluation tools to assess action steps; however, C(2)(c) fails to provide convincing evidence that the district will also address the general goal of improving school climate or the specific goal of narrowing achievement gaps.

C(2)(d) provides inadequate support for a high-quality plan because it only makes general statements about the district's efforts to recruit, develop, and retain effective teachers. For example, the application explains that the district will work with local colleges and universities to place student teachers in full-time positions, but it does not indicate how or even whether the district will mentor and develop student teachers so that they are effective once they enter the classroom.

Overall, this section of the application scores in the medium range because the applicant demonstrates an insufficient plan to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The district has established some reasonable activities and goals, but it has not included specifics to demonstrate that it has a high-quality plan. Therefore, the ambitious nature of the goals is unclear, and the application does not articulate its plan to an appropriate extent.

Score: 8

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**8**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Based on the district’s organizational structure, this applicant explains that its deputy superintendent monitor principals as they implement the reforms that the LEA's central office and the members of its governance structure “embrace the initiatives included in this proposal.” This assertion is reasonable because the district has invested in an Educational Management Organization that will provide consultation throughout the process of implementation. Nevertheless, the applicant does not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate how central office and governance structure members will play an active role in the overall process. Evidence of direct involvement in a supportive capacity would support personalized learning to a greater extent.

School leadership teams in this district have some flexibility and autonomy because they hire their own staff, create the school schedule, and control school budgets. Nevertheless, this flexibility and autonomy is somewhat limited because it will not allow for significant or ambitious reforms in the personalization of learning.

In terms of credit based on demonstrated mastery, the district presents a somewhat limited vision because it presents only online courses, credit recovery courses, and extended learning opportunities as concrete ways to individualize instruction. These options provide limited flexibility because they all take place beyond the traditional classroom.

As with D(1)(c), the applicant provides a students with limited options for demonstrating mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways because it only lists formative state assessments, online coursework, and credit recovery programs as ways to demonstrate mastery.

For D(1)(e) the applicant demonstrates some flexibility based on individual student needs because English language learners may benefit from pullout or inclusion models depending on a student's needs. These students also benefit from Individual Learning Plans. The district utilizes Individualized Education Plans for students who have disabilities. The application demonstrates the district's willingness to serve individual student needs because it includes many examples of district supports (such as Dynavox, Intellikeys keyboard, and a Vraille Music Translator), but it also emphasizes that the district "strives to have all students participate in the general education curriculum and setting, to the greatest extent possible."

In addition to addressing the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners, the applicant appropriately describes some of the ways that it individualizes instruction for its gifted students such as Advanced Placement courses and dual enrollment coursework.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. The applicant is limited by its inability to facilitate personalized learning to some extent because its students do not have very personalized ways to demonstrate mastery or to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Though the applicant provides reasonable learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible, its school leadership teams do not benefit from the level of flexibility and autonomy that would fully facilitate personalized learning.

Score: 8

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence in this section that it has made some progress towards supporting personalized learning with its infrastructure because it explains that students have access to technology as a result of extended building hours and that it uses online systems (such as Infinite Campus and Performance Matters) to collect and track student behavior, demographics, and achievement data. However, the applicant also includes irrelevant information in this section such as the cataloging system used by the district's libraries.

The applicant provides stakeholders with some information because it maintains a website that has links to instructional resources, but the narrative fails to provide any examples. Therefore, the appropriateness and effectiveness of the resources cannot be determined. Similarly, the application provides insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of its internal data systems because it lists programs that "provide access to student achievement data, teaching and learning content, and curriculum design tools" (such as Learning Village and Student Longitudinal Data System websites). However, there are no examples of what this data looks like. For example the narrative explains that these software programs provide curriculum design tools without providing anything to illustrate what the tools are like.

The district appears to provide some external technical support that includes hands-on technical troubleshooting, but the narrative also makes the mistake of suggesting that students receive professional development opportunities instead of explaining how teachers are supported and how students are taken into account and included in the development of learning strategies. The applicant does vaguely indicate that parents receive technical support from technology department and building level administrative assistants, but there is no evidence for how comprehensive this support is because the narrative only states that "the technology department and building level administrators" support parents with no mention of any of the tools they might use to communicate with parents effectively.

The applicant explains that the district does provide open data export but its output options are limited because it only provides pdf or Microsoft Office documents. However, it is unclear whether the reason for this restrictive nature of data sharing is out of necessity or convenience. Nevertheless, the district makes some efforts to provide students and parents with additional data resources because it will customize and print reports based on requests.

In D(2)(d) the applicant's references to interoperable data systems are vague because the narrative only explains that "systems routinely share information" and that evaluation systems are hosted by the state Department of Education. There is no reference to specific ways in which educators, parents, or families can access and analyze the data.

Overall, this section of the application scores in the medium range because the applicant demonstrates some of the ways in which the district supports personalized learning through its infrastructure, but the applicant also inconsistently provides evidence of how effectively it shares information and makes its infrastructure user-friendly.

Score: 5

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In E(1), the applicant presents a reasonable grant monitoring approach because the proposed platform includes a strategic plan that focuses on six areas (i.e. Focus on Students is used to develop a personalized learning plan that "guarantees student competency in core subjects"). However, the district fails to document the goals, strategies, and action steps for each of the six areas, and as a result, they do not provide sufficient evidence that they will lead to continuous improvement. For example, "Focus on Students" states that a personalized learning plan will guarantee student competency in core subjects, but the applicant does not explain how the personalized learning plan will be assessed, which diagnostic instruction will be provided as a result, or how the plan can guarantee competency.

The applicant does provide some evidence for how it will collect and manage student data because the data will be used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses in a very timely manner and will guide professional development. The applicant does not, however, articulate effectively how the district will plan for ongoing feedback and or will accomplish corrections because it does not provide any specifics in the form of goals, activities, or timelines.

Also in E(1), the applicant explains that grant personnel will be hired and will include a grant coordinator and external program evaluator as well as 7 workplace learning/magnet-theme school coordinators. However, the role these employees will play in continuous improvement is unclear, and the positions are mentioned nowhere else in the application.

A chart presents general timeline information and deliverables. For example, magnet/theme school coordinators conduct monthly site observations and complete monthly reports. Similarly the External Program Evaluator submits an annual report. However this section also does not explain whether those overseeing the plan will share the information with the public. The district's continuous improvement process is therefore insufficient because it does not offer specific that demonstrate evidence that the plan will lead to ongoing improvement or the achievement of goals.

Overall, this section of the application scores in the medium range because while the applicant provides some reasonable evidence that the district will be able to undertake continuous improvement, this section also lacks details that are necessary for a high-quality plan.

Score: 7

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the applicant explains that it will provide communication to external stakeholders including parenting classes and a resource center through which parents can "access materials and resources that enhance student learning." An appendix item includeds a "Fact Sheet" for the district Welcome Center, and it demonstrates ways that the district supports ongoing engagement with teachers, parents, and the community in general because it includes education programs such as Teacher CRAM School, which supports "new and not-so-new" teachers; efficacy training for parents and families; and English language learner classes.

The district has also developed a "wrap around service plan" that provides a variety of support services because it includes services related to everything from academic guidance to physical health services.

A district web site shares information with the general public because it includes a monthly district newsletter, and a telecommunication tool can call or email families with important updates. Additionally, the public relations department communicates with families because it emails the district newsletter and provides communication about board meetings and press releases.

The Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Department demonstrates ongoing engagement with external stakeholders because it works with local colleges and businesses "to support and enrich the seven magnet programs." These "programs" most likely refer to the magnet schools that the district is continuing to develop, but the applicant does not make this clear.

The district offers traditional communication methods to engage with internal stakeholders because it lists "email, online benefits, professional learning, and itranet information" as tools for communication.

Finally, the district provides a chart the indicates six grant activites, such as "restructure E-mail system"; timelines with somewhat specific monthly deadlines and general "on-going" schedules; deliverables, including such items as course offerings and career fairs; and responsible parties, such as Technology Services and the CTAE Department.

The applicant includes elements of a high-quality plan throughout this section, especially in the communication and engagement implementation chart. However, the details provided in this section are generally not specific to an extent that demonstrates the effectiveness of the district's ongoing communication and engagement efforts. For example, the wraparound service plan does not include any specific goals or responsible partners. Similarly, the district does not provide much evidence of a high-quality plan in relation to one of its strongest communication and engagement tools, the Welcome Center.

Overall, the application scores in the medium range for this selection criteria because while it does explain many of the ways that it provides ongoing commuication and engagement to internal and external stakeholders, it fails to provide evidence that it has a high-quality plan to the fullest extent possible.

Score: 3

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance Measures for All

In section E(3), the applicant has not added any performance measures beyond those required by E(3). The data that the district presents contains discrepancies and inconsistent data. For example, none of these charts includes a projected number of teachers or principals in years beyond the baseline, and the proposed target percentages are completely irrelevant to the baseline percentages. For example, 52% of Asian students had highly effective teachers in 2012-13, but the target for these students in 2013-14 is only 15%. This same target also applies to Hispanic students even though only 3.9% of Hispanic students had a highly effective teacher in 2012-13. Similarly, the percent of highly effective teachers in the first chart added to the percent of effective teachers in the second chart is greater than 100%. For example, the first chart indicates that 9.6% of all students have a highly effective teacher and the second chart indicates that 97.8% of students have an effective teacher. Presumably the applicant may have included the numbers for all students who have an effective teacher AND a highly effective teacher in the second chart, but the accuracy and consistency of the data is troubling because the charts present inconsistent and confusing information.

Performance Measures for PreK-3

The applicant includes the two required performance measures for students at the PreK-3 level, and it selects proficiency on English language arts Growth Learning Objectives (GLOs) for "a" and proficiency on physical education GLOs for "b." The applicant, however, fails to offer any commentary on any of these performance measures. Furthermore, the baseline and target data is confusing because it uses data from 2013-14 for its baseline yet still labels a second column of 2013-14 data as its first year target. The district could presumably have assessed students this fall and reported those numbers as its baseline data, but achievement throughout the year is even more ambiguous then. The lack of commentary and the inconsistent data in this section make it difficult to determine whether the performance measures are ambitious yet achievable.

Performance Measures for 4-8

For grades 4-8, the applicant includes CRCT ELA and Math baseline and target data to track the college- and career-readiness of its students. Most of the targets seem appropriately ambitious and achievable, but there are again some inconsistences. For example, the ELA baseline percentages for Hispanic students and Multi-racial students are both just below 88%; however, the 2013-14 target for Hispanics is 92.1% while the 2013-14 target for Multi-racial students is 95%. On the CRCT Math assessments, the district has set an unrealistic goal for all students because the baseline is 68.85% and the 2013-14 target is 88.1%, after which students are expected to increase their scores by just over one percentage point per year.

The applicant does present ambitious yet achievable goals for a grade 4-8 performance measure of student Lexile scores because the target percentages are consistent in relation to the baseline percentages and they indicate appropriate goals.

The final grade 4-8 performance measure documents an important social-emotional leading indicator because it focuses on decreasing the number of expulsions and out-of-school suspensions across subgroups. The applicant selected a justifiable leading indicator because of 9,280 total students in grades 4-8, there were 1,790 expulsion or out-of-school suspension incidents in 2012-13, and 1,603 of those instances involved black students.

Performance Measures for 9-12

The applicant includes a chart with consistent baseline data and targets for the percentage of participating students who complete a FAFSA form. Overall, the targets for this performance measure could be more ambitious because each sub-group is only expected to have just over a 5 percentage point increase throughout and following the grant with yearly target increases of just above and below 1 percentage point. Furthermore, these targets are insufficient because this performance measure has a wide-reaching impact that relates directly to college enrollment rates.

For grades 9-12 performance measure "c," the applicant proposes a measure of career-readiness based on an End-of-Pathway assessment for students in grade 12 as well as ambitious if not achievable targets. The targets may not be achievable because for every sub-group 95% percent of students are expected to be on track to being career-ready post-grant even though baseline percentages from 2012-13 are as low as 17.18% for black students and only as high as 38.94% for white students.

The applicant includes an effective performance measure based on the Lexile scores of entering 9th graders because the baseline numbers are consistent and the targets for each year are ambitious yet achievable.

Finally, the data for the health or social-emotional leading indicator for 9-12 graders is also based on the number of expulsions and out-of-school suspensions; however, this performance measure only includes data for Asian, black, and Hispanic students. As with the comparable grade 4-8 performance measure, the applicant has

selected a justifiable leading indicator because of there were 1,683 expulsion or out-of-school suspension incidents in 2012-13, and 1,449 of those instances involved black students.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. Though the application does include ambitious yet achievable performance measures in some instances, it does not thoroughly explain its rationale for any of the applicant-proposed measures, nor does it explain how the measure will provide effective information or how it will be improved if necessary. Furthermore, while some targets are ambitious, others are not ambitious enough or are unachievable.

Score: 2

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**0**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not include any evidence or a narrative that addresses E(4) because the application includes a section with performance measures [E(3)] and then moves directly on to F(1). There is one page in the middle of E(3) that may have been intended to address E(4) because it describes the use of an evaluation plan to measure "the impact of grant funded programs," and it explains that a grant coordinator will work closely with an outside evaluator. However, the applicant does not articulate a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans nor does it provide anything specific about methods of evaluation.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For F(1) the applicant presents an Overall Budget Summary Table (Subpart 1) that is reasonable and sufficient because it provides relevant information for each of the budget categories across the four years of the grant. However, the applicant's Overall Budget Summary Narrative (Subpart 2) is insufficient because it does not provide a sufficient rationale. The narrative only explains that its approach to this grant "lies in expanding the work that was begun in the previously awarded SEA RT3 grant" and again provides its vision for change in the form of a graphic incorporating the district's three Project areas. Furthermore, neither the table nor the budget identify which funds are one-time only investments. The table does clearly indicate that $368,000.00 over the total project's budget of $29,978,846.80 will come from another source.

For Budget Subpart 3 the applicant provides a partially completed table because it does not include requested funds for training stipends or the "Other" category. Furthermore, the budget summary table does not indicate any personnel, fringe benefits, or travel expenses for Year 1 of the project. It does justify the lack of a Year 1 personnel expense because it explains in Budget Subpart 4 that the Program Manager who will oversee and support all aspects of the grant will be compensated with funds from the last year of the current RT3 grant. However, this explanation is inconsistent with the applicant's next statement in Subpart 4 that those funds only continue through September 23, 2013. Furthermore, the narrative for the Program Manager gets even more confusing towards the end because it also includes the rationale for supply costs.

To continue to address the rest of Budget Subpart 4, the applicant includes in its next paragraph relevant information because it explains that Growth Learning Objective team members will continue to develop and refine assessments in eight subjects over the course of "ten days off contract." However, while the applicant does mention the GLO team members elsewhere in the application, their involvement at this level is not effectively documented other than in the budget.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range. The applicant identifies all of its funding sources, but it does not provide consistently appropriate rationale for its investments and priorities. Additionally, the applicant does not clearly indicate which funds are one-time investments.

Score: 4

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Even though the applicant explains that it has focused on goals that are high-need and high-cost, it supports its rationale that they are likely to be sustainable because the grant will provide the necessary funds for "initiatives that [it] could not otherwise readily-afford that were [nevertheless] sustainable." The applicant also makes reasonable arguments that its plan will be sustainable because it explains that it will "utilize existing programs, partnerships, and resources when possible."

Following its introductory paragraphs for F(2), the applicant provides narratives about the three projects of its plan; however, the narratives are not relevant as described because they merely summarize the projects. For example, the narrative for Project # 1 discusses opportunities students will have (such as extended-day, -week, and -year supports) with no reference to sustainability.

The applicant does provide a chart that is effective because the chart presents a list of activities, descriptions for those activities, and designations of whether the activities involve one-time investments and whether they will be completed during or after the grant funding period. This information would also have added important details to F(1) if it had been provided in conjunction with the budget summary tables.

Despite the inclusion of this chart, the applicant does not fully address the elements of F(2) because it provides limited evidence of sustainability. The applicant also fails to indicate other funding sources from which it will receive support as well as how it plans to evaluate past investments in order to inform future expenditures.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range because the applicant does not include convincing evidence that it has developed a high-quality plan for sustainability. Though the applicant outlines activities for each of its three "Projects," it does not clearly distinguish between relevant goals and deliverables, and there is no timeline.

Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**3**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

For the Competitive Preference Priority, the applicant particularly provides student and family supports because it offers a variety of tools and services. For example parents are involved in developing college and career goals, and families can contribute to a Data Gallery in the Parent-Teacher Resource Center. The district also works with faith-based partners that provide transportation to families. The "Orange Duffel Bag Foundation" similarly partners with the district to help its homeless/highly mobile youth.

The applicant also demonstrates that it meets item "1" of the Competitive Preference Priority because it has worked with the National Opportunity to Learn Campaign. As a result, students learn "to self-regulate their learning, life,and environment" and receive access to various types of support.

To meet the requirements of "2," the applicant identifies three population-level desired results, one of which addresses the parents of students in all grades and the other two of which address the students themselves. The population-level desired results are not comprehensive because they are so limited in number and so general in scope.

The applicant also provides a chart that shows that the district plans to decrease achievement gaps; however, the purpose of the chart is confusing because the applicant does not directly connect the chart to any of the narrative offered in the Competitive Preference Priority.

The applicant does not clearly address how it will build the capacity of staff according to the subsections of (5) because it really only references (5)(d) early in the Competitive Preference Priority narrative. The applicant plans to engage parents because it will empower them by providing them with quantitative and qualitative data as well as opportunities to attend parent workshops.

The overall score for this section falls in the medium range because the applicant fails to demonstrate that it will convincingly integrate public or private resources in a partnership that will augment the district's abilities to serve the needs of students and families. In general the applicant provides limited and, at times, confusing narratives because it jumps from a narrative on promising community partnerships to an unclear narrative on how to "empowering through student data." Similarly, the applicant incorporates population-level desired results and indicators, but it does not provide sufficient evidence of how it will track indicators, use data, and develop strategies that will scale the model beyond those students it has included in the plan to support the students in the three schools that it is not including.

Score: 3

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant does not meet Absolute Priority 1 because it inconsistently addresses the components of the Priority throughout its responses to the selection criteria. The applicant does demonstrate strong evidence of the district's inclusion of standards and assessments because it incorporates them extensively throughout its plan. However, it does not convincingly explain how it will use data related to students' achievement of these standards and achievement on these assessments in order to significantly improve learning and teaching. For example, the applicant does not provide convincing evidence that it will utilize data systems to inform educators and improve instruction to the greatest extent possible because it fails to include convincing details of how it will turn data analysis into results.

The applicant provides some evidence that it will recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, but the evidence is not always thorough and convincing because the applicant focuses primarily on assessing effectiveness and not as much on developing effectiveness and rewarding and retaining effective teachers. As a result, the applicant also does not convincingly explain how it will increase the effectiveness of its educators, accelerate student achievement, and deepen student learning to meet Absolute Priority 1.

The applicant fails to demonstrate that it will be achievable for it to turn around its lowest-achieving schools because it does not provide thorough evidence particular to this educational assurance area throughout the application. Similarly, the applicant does not convincingly demonstrate that it will be able to decrease student achievement gaps . Overall, the applicant provides insufficient evidence to meet these criteria because it does not always include an appropriate level of details in sections relevant to turning around its lowest-achieving schools and decreasing student achievement gaps to demonstrate how it will meet these requirements.

Overall, the applicant has not met the requirements of Absolute Priority 1 because it has not coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will meet all of the elements of Absolute Priority 1 and particularly those related to using data to inform educators and improve instruction, turning around its lowest-achieving schools, increasing teacher effectiveness, and increasing the rates at which students graduate college- and career-ready.

Total	**210**	**104**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0053GA-3 for Bibb County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not follow a clear path for their vision for reform in the district. While the applicant provided evidence of programs and projects they would like to implement, the vision was not coherent and comprehensive. For example, the applicant indicated the vision of the BCSD is to develop a highly trained staff and an engaged community dedicated to educating each student for a 21st century, multi-ethnic, global economy. However relevant, the applicant did not align this vision with goals and objectives relevant to the development of a 21st Century learner. There were no references to what the classroom experiences of an engaged student would look like.

While some work has been done to developing a framework for reform in the district, the framework is not aligned with a coherent vision that encompasses solid goals for accelerating student achievement. The applicant indicated the district has begun to work on the four core areas with funding from the State of Georgia's RTT-3 grant award. For example, the district has compiled a list of programs and projects they have identified to address: (1) standards and achievement-because the applicant has adopted new English and Language Arts and Math standards incorporating the Common Core Standards to ensure mastery of the skills and knowledge needed for success beyond high school; (2) data systems to improve instruction-because the applicant is developing the an integrated data management system and assessment delivery platform that can be used to track student data; (3) great teachers, great leaders-because the applicant is developing a teacher and leader evaluation effectiveness system to track teacher performance that is linked to student achievement, and (4) turning around lowest achieving schools- because the applicant is providing low performing high

schools subject matter and graduation coaches. While the applicant addressed the four core educational assurances, there is a lack of evidence to indicate the four core educational assurances have been aligned with a vision for reform.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide clear details to justify their approach to implementing the reforms listed in the proposal by school. The data provided in the charts was not comprehensive enough to determine which schools are eligible to participate and which schools would benefit most from participating in the proposed project activities. The applicant did not provide a clear description of the process used to select schools to participate in the program. The applicant indicated that the district will serve approximately 24,400 students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve during the 2013-2014 school year, but no justfication for a district-wide implementation.

The applicant indicated that since all of the school communities in their district face educational challenges and all schools have low achievement rates as the reason for including all schools in the proposal. However, this particular reason does not provide the appropriate justification to include all schools. Additionally, there was no information to explain why the special needs schools and behaviorally based alternative schools would not be included in as schools that would offer personalized learning environments.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a reasonable high-quality plan for LEA-wide reform and change. Although the applicant have made some strides in developing a framework for reform and change in the district the applicant was not able to articulate how their reform proposal translate into meaningful reform support district-wide. The applicant does not provide any goals and objectives with a timeline of activities and deliverables that are indicative of a high-quality plan. Since the applicant does not articulate any goals and objectives, there is no logical alignment of the theory of change to describe how they will improve student learning outcomes by students who will be served by the program. For example, since the applicant is proposing a district-wide reform effort, some mention as to how a K-12 program will impact the district as a whole would have been helpful to determine if this decision was reasonable and would make a difference in all schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide sufficient information to determine if the proposed programmatic vision would likely result in improved student learning or performance growth. The lack of written goals and a vision for the project provided limited opportunities for the reader to determine if the applicant will be able to increase achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollments. The data provided by the applicant in the charts and tables did not provide a narrative to correlate the projected increases. Not enough information was provided. The applicant does provide information that based on their 2011-12 state summative assessments results that significant achievement gaps exist among Black and Hispanic students by more than 10% and the applicant is projecting to close those gaps in five years by more than 50%. More information is needed to determine how the applicant's various project initiatives will contribute to closing this gaps by such huge percentage. Similar gaps appear in state CRCT and EOCT testing and the applicant is projecting over 90% increases in five years, and again there are no justifications in place in the narrative to indicate how the applicant will achieve these gains.

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**	**9**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The BCPS has demonstrated some evidence of a record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching by providing limited personalized learning environments in the district. The applicant has done this work with support of the RT3-D grant provided by the state. However, the applicant indicated the achievement gap continues to widen between low performing students and students meeting state proficiency and national norm assessments. Based on this information, it would have been useful for the applicant to revisit their vision and develop the appropriate goals and objectives to reflect what they envision accomplishing for the RTT-D grant.

(a) While the applicant has not seen much prior success over the past 4 years in improving student learning outcomes and closing the gaps, there have been some interventions put in place to address the problems. The interventions will provide the schools much needed support to continue making strides. Evidence of the prior successes include the following:

(b) The applicant did not provide evidence to demonstrate a clear record of success and ambitious and significant reforms have taken place in the district's persistently lowest-achieving schools. However, the applicant has implemented mentoring, coaching, and induction programs to support instructional improvement and support to low-performing schools. The applicant has implemented in some low-performing schools a new reading program, through Scholastic, Read 180 and Systems 44 for students reading significantly below grade level. The reading intervention program is used to target students significantly reading below grade level.

(c) The applicant did not demonstrate evidence of making student performance data available to students and parents.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided evidence that the school district has a reasonably high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. For example, the district maintains a district website that is accessible to anyone with internet access and each school in the district also maintains their own school website which can be accessed from the main Bibb County homepage. The applicant's process for providing a high level of transparency is effective because information regarding the Board of Education meetings are published after every Board of Education Meeting and emailed to a list of stakeholders.

Additonally, through the Board of Education link on the BCSD web site the public can view the agenda and supporting documents associated with every meeting and the BCSD is required to advertise the proposed budget for the upcoming year in the local paper. This along with a public hearing on the budget allows stakeholders from the community to give input in the budgeting process. The State of Georgia has developed the website *Open Georgia* that provides Georgia taxpayers with a gateway for obtaining information and key documents about how the State of Georgia spends tax dollars and other revenues to provide services to Georgians. On an annual basis,

BCSD Board of Education convenes its Financial Committee to review the prior year investments, investment policy, and cash balances in each fund. The Financial Committee makes recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Education for any changes in policy or structure to its investment portfolio. The documents are published on BCSD's website. All of the processes and procedures support a reasonably high level of transparency. Teacher and staff salary information is available at the Georgia Teach site and is open for public review.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided very little evidence that demonstrates the district will have the legal autonomy under state legal statues and regulatory requirements to implement reforms that will require a major change in how the district operate and implement educational programming. This includes developing personalized learning environments, which will drastically change the traditional format of schools.

Some evidence was present in the narrative to indicate the State of Georgia has put various systems in place to support reform in all state districts. For example, several of the initiatives that are being proposed by the applicant in their proposal are supported by the State of Georgia. For example:

(1) the **Teacher and Leaders Evaluation System**: As part of the Race to the Top Initiative (RT3), Georgia implemented the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) . The TKES is a common evaluation system that will allow the state to ensure consistency and comparability across districts, based on a common definition of teacher effectiveness;

(2) **Rigorous Academic Standards:** In July 2010, the Georgia Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades K–12, then transitioned to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).

(3) **Data Systems to Improve Instruction**: As a part of the initial RT3 grant awarded to the state of Georgia, Georgia implemented a robust K–12 State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) during SY 2010-2011. The GADOE is in the process of expanding the SLDS to include P-20 data and to provide greater access to information by connecting data from disparate systems via a data hub.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**9**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence of stakeholder involvement with the development of the RTT-D grant proposal. For example, the various groups, such as parent, teachers and community members held small meetings to incorporate certain aspects of the proposal. Teachers were given opportunities to provide input. There is no union for teachers in the State of Georgia. A teacher survey yielded 71% support for a technology initiative and 93% supported a blended learning environment if they received adequate training. However, 25% of the teachers were not familiar with the concept of personalized learning environments. This was an opportunity to provide information sessions to gave teacher and leader support. Although there are letters of support in the Appendix, the applicant does not provide a full discussion as to how the key stakeholders who provided letters participated in the planning process. This is especially evident with parental participation. Although there appears to have been collaborative support to develop a strategic plan for the district, this support is not evident whole preparing the grant proposal.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed, thorough, and credible high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Significant thought contributed to student learning and the plan to meet each of the criteria and project goals. The applicant's plan is high quality because there are supportive elements for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students with the needed support for college and career ready courses. The plan includes timelines, key goals and rationales for activities that are aligned with details on how each student will have access to personalized instructional content and skill development designed to enable them to student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and to ensure he or she can graduate on time and college and career ready.

The district provides a realistic vision of the plan that will be accomplished through the following projects:(1) Personalized Instruction; (2) Personalized Learning Opportunities for Teachers and Students (PreK-12); (3) Opportunities for Graduation and Post-secondary Preparation (Grades 6-12) ;(4) Personalized Data; and (5) Technology.

- Each required element and how the district proposes to meet the element is clearly defined in tables and within the narrative. The table presents clear evidence of thoughtful integration of the criteria in support of each student's personalized learning. The proposal outlines strategies for students and parents to understand what they learn is key to success through the each student's electronic portfolio, and electronic academic plan.

- Students will identify and pursue learning goals linked to common core standards and the elementary curriculum through their electronic plans They will receive real-time feedback from teachers which will help them understand progress measurement and new learning tasks based on current understanding.

- The applicant provided a table in which clear evidence of strategies and guidelines supporting student access to and management of their academic skills progress. Access to deep learning experiences in areas of interest will be provided by allotting time for students to engage at least once per week and later once per day in interest-driven activities.

- Each student will be required to develop and maintain a personalized sequence of content and skill to graduate college and career ready managed through technology. Students, their parents and their teacher will have access to the portfolio.

- A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and environments will be provided through project-based learning within the classroom and with other schools, states and countries and through the partner developed digital lessons which require a global or multi-cultural focus

- The district will use its Response to Intervention approach to differentiate instruction to accommodate and provide and quality strategies for high-need students to graduate. Low performing students in communication arts and math will attend the afterschool extended learning programs for additional learning support.

The applicant further provides comprehensive narrative and tabled information delineating project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones. The listed project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones are highly detailed, well planned, extensive and very well thought out and proposed. The applicant provides an excellent plan and response to implement personalized student learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a comprehensive and relatively high-quality plan that describes strategies for ensuring highly effective teachers and administrators to implement the various projects. During the strategic planning process of their initiatives, teachers indicated they will support the project as long as they have the appropriate training. As a result, all participating teachers will participate in high-quality professional development that will enable them to identify learning targets for each class they teach. Additionally, the newly adopted teacher evaluation system provides a process to better assess the performance of teachers and leaders to ensure that students have the most effective teacher in the classroom and school leaders. The applicant has a high-quality plan that includes key goals, timelines, activities, and responsible personnel. The applicant demonstrates how the approach will provide the needed support mechanisms and resources to support teaching and learning through the following: (1) provide specific training for teachers to plan for a personalized learning classroom, which is very different from a delivery entered approach to teaching, (2) scheduling provisions have been included for teachers to come together to discuss and identify the best methods of assessment, (3) 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 applicant clearly shows it has a solid plan for developing and delivering instruction in a personalized learning environment, and (4) professional development will be provided to inform teachers on how student mastery unit data system will assist with transparent sharing of data, because each teacher that teaches a common course and school administrators will have access to the unit mastery data.

The applicant clearly shows how all participating school leaders and school leadership teams will have training policies, tools, data and resources that will enable them to structure an effective learning environment that that meet individual student academic needs and accelerate student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college and career ready standards. The training, system and practices will continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps are clearly stated in the proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan demonstrating that practices, policies and rules are in placed to support the infrastructure during the implementaton of the project. The plan is high-quality because the BCSD has policies and procedures in place to ensure the enforcement of student attendance by school zones and acceptance into theme schools. The enforcement polices and procedures are designed to ensure all students and families can informed decisions and have access to school options (e.g., STEM/Engineering, Advanced Studies/Technology, Advanced Studies/International Studies, Career Center Academy, Law and Business, Health Sciences, and International Baccalaureate/Fine Arts). Ensuring that all students have equal access to programs provides students opportunities to master standards in multiple and comparable ways. The plan includes, timelines, rationales, and deliverables that are aligned and appropriate to support project implementation.

The superintendent, central office leadership team, and the BOE embraces all of the initiatives included in the proposal and as a result, the BCSD district office will provide support as outlined in the district's strategic plan to provide every student, educator, school, and classroom the support and resources need to ensure all projects outlined in the proposal are met. For example, the deputy superintendents will continuously monitor the principals' implementation of all elements of the continuous improvement process. Each month, the deputy superintendent will retrieve data from Performance Matters. When the deputy superintendents see schools that are struggling, that school receives additional central office support services that aligned to the schools specific needs (e.g., more frequent monitoring; realigning resources, both human and capital, to support student learning; ensuring the routine observation of instruction). While this strategy allows decentralization for school leaders to manage, the focus will be on providing direct support and help to the schools to ensure that high-level leadership is immediately available. The applicant did not provide information on learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. This information is key for determining if comprehensive polices and infrastructures are in place for all students.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not present a high-quality plan that supports the overall vision of reform as required by the Race to the Top District core educational reform efforts, because the plan does not ensures that all students, parents, educators, and stakeholders will have the necessary tools to implement the proposed project design. There is significant support from the State and local resources as evidenced by the letters of support outlining commitments to the project by the various stakeholders. The implementation of a strong data system that provides teachers, administrators, students, and parents with instructional materials and digital content that can be incorporated into lesson plans is another example of the policies and infrastructure that will be used to meet the stated objectives outlined in the proposal. The plan

includes some relevant timelines, rationales, relevant activities that are appropriately aligned with the plan.

The student data system and the student learning guide will set mastery expectations and requirements for each unit of study. This will be used to help students and parents access requirements. Each learning guide will also be posted on the web and parents will receive training on how to access the information. For parents who do not have off campus internet access the district will be creating an onsite access point if they do not have electronic access at home. The applicant has a solid plan to make sure parental access to the student's data is clearly defined for their use.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a relatively detailed plan that includes all elements of a high-quality plan (i.e., goals, timelines, key personnel, and activities) to ensure that the project is meeting its stated objectives. The importance of this project is well-documented as each of the strategic initiatives will be monitored by the district office staff and reports directly to the superintendent to provide monthly updates on the project. To ensure success, the applicant has built in a process for status reports to the public that includes quarterly and annual reports that are posted to the website and that are presented through facilitated discussions.

The applicant clearly indicates it will build on the continues improvement project monitoring and evaluation process that is built into the project. The applicant describes a thorough and continuous improvement process in which the district will be utilizing qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods. The data will be collected and reviewed regularly by various implementation committees that will support the development of the project at the and district level. The applicant provided a strong plan of action for accomplishing all tasks related to continuous improvement. For example, curriculum and assessment development will occur across schools with the implementation of practices focusing on the development at each site. This component will be an on-going basis across the district. Common course teachers will come together to establish learning targets and develop common post assessments.

The applicant will additionally ensure the processes for continuous improvement are aligned with data streams, goal setting, strategies for goal attainment. Within this process, data will be continuously gathered to inform decision-making at all vertical levels of a school, from the district to the school to the classroom to the student. Curriculum, instructional best practices and strategies, and district formative assessments (e.g., Benchmarks) will be aligned to state standards. Learning teams will play a significant role in assisting grade-level and/or curriculum groups disaggregate and analyze data in a collaborative manner in order to adjust instruction, share effective best practices, and identify remedial interventions for targeted students.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a comprehensive and high-quality plan for ensuring on-going communication and engagement with all stakeholders, such as parents, students, teachers, principals, and community leaders. The plan is high-quality because the methods of communication includes monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual meetings led by the superintendent. The applicant will continue with current methods of engaging external stakeholders through various sources such as the BSCD Welcome Center. The BCSD Welcome Center is the main hub of information for the district. Student registration and transfer are managed through the Welcome Center. Parenting classes are offered at the Welcome Center to provide parents with knowledge regarding internet safety, student instruction, and other skills to provide support at home for their children's academic success. A Resource Center is housed at the Welcome Center for parents to access materials and resources that enhance student learning. The center will provide extremely important services for parents. The plan includes timelines for implementation, appropriate deliverables, and rationales for each activity.

The applicant plan will be supported by other effective communication methods to ensure ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders because the district has developed and implemented district wide wrap around service plan that addresses academic guidance, classroom and site behavior management, mental health services, hospital-homebound services, and physical health services. The district web site will share information about events and announcements throughout the district. The website creates a receptive environment that fosters active engagement, accountability, and collaboration to support families, and promote college readiness. Information that can be found on the website includes: monthly district newsletter, school and district calendars, Board Briefs, district departmental information, as well as school/teacher web pages, web site include blogs, podcasts, surveys, homework drop boxes, and photo galleries.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Bibb County School District has identified a number of indicators of the grant's required 12 performance measures. The BCSD has set forth an ambitious yet achievable set of performance measures. Measures are well conceptualized, and organized into age-appropriate grade bands of PreK-3; 6-8, and 9-12. They have proposed an appropriate set of required and applicant-proposed measures for each grade band. Grade level targets are appropriate and are equitable divided across all sub-groups of students.

The applicant does an excellent job of identifying performance measures that are both ambitious and obtainable. The rationale for each of the measures is clearly described and includes information as to how the stated performance measure provides rigorous and formative information aligned to the four core educational assurances. For example, when deciding on the percentage of students overall and by subgroup whose teacher of record is considered effective or highly effective, the applicant reflected on historically how teachers were rated, and wanted a measure that would allow them to differentiate teacher performance and human capital decisions based on performance. Each of the stated objectives has a formative and summative aspect that will allow for a high-quality and comprehensive project evaluation with results reported quarterly and annually. The applicant was not awarded full points because the proposal does not provide information as to how they currently address or will address in the future performance measures in grades 9-12. For example, (a) the applicant does not provide information on the number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form; (b) the applicant does not provide information on the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator; and (c) the applicant does not provide information on a proposed grade-appropriate health or social-emotional indicator for implementation in their plan.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**0**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not address or include a section for E(4). The information was not available in other sections of the proposal narrative.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a reasonable and cost efficient budget for this proposal. This budget was developed and organized across four project levels: project management, evaluation and stakeholder engagement, building local capacity, and student access and support. The applicant requests $ 29,978,846.80 over the four year period of the grant to serve students and educators. The applicant provided a comprehensive description of the funds the applicant will use to support project implementation as well as a rationale for investments and priorities. It includes an extensive break down for each project level, and indicates where ongoing funds are needed versus one-time operational funds. This design of the budget should support students in a personalized learning environment, transform classroom practice, accelerate students' achievement, and ensure long-term sustainability.

The applicant does not state that any revenue will be produced from the implementation of the RTT-D grant. The funds were identified for one time use (such as laptops, general office supplies, student e-portfolio and data system software) are all reasonable and specific to the grant. The funds used for ongoing operational costs are clear and purposeful to allow the initial grant plan to continue past the grant period. However, the applicant does not clarify one statement regarding the non-inclusion in the budget of purchases over $30,000 due to polices that require bidding for amounts in this range and over. More clarification is needed on Itemized costs for equipment, infrastructure, consultants, and assessment/diagnostic instruments that were intentionally left out of the grant application.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a conclusive or coherent narrative to clarify how they will sustain the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan did not include information on support from State and local government leaders or other sources of financial support. There was no information in the plan to address how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes relative to a post-grant budget. Additionally, the applicant did not include an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. The applicant did however, specify that any entities and individuals contracted to provide services through the proposal will be considered one-time expenditures, with no intention of sustaining the contractors specific to the initiative beyond the grant funding period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**6**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a satisfactory plan to use existing partners to provide social and emotional supports for students and families. The partnership focuses on leveraging the home-school-community partnership such as eliminating barriers to student attendance and ensuring social, emotional, and academic needs of each student are met so the he/she can succeed. Examples of support include, supporting social/emotional or family needs, and helping students and parents to make effective and informed decisions about course work selection for high school and preparation for post-secondary education or careers. Examples of partner organizations includes agencies such as: (1) National Opportunity to Learn Campaign, (2) The Welcome Center, (3) Middle Georgia Regional Commission, (4) Mercer University Department of Early Childhood Education, and (5) the Macon Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Each of the eleven population-level outcomes proposed will be tracked through appropriate performance indicators identified by the applicant. The associated measures are available through data sources that are already in place in the district. The applicant will use the proposed indicators to identify student needs and target resources to decides the priority of proposed initiatives. Staff will receive the appropriate training on the design and implementation of data-informed programs that align with school improvement plans that address specific goals: school safety, mental health, student achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and achievement gaps. Other specialized training will be provided by the district. Examples of these trainings include

While the applicant provides a plan for supporting student achievement, it is not clear as to how the services being provided by partners will help students' achievement over a period of time. The applicant lacks clear information on how they are going to scale-up their approach beyond the participating students. The applicant discusses engaging parents, but it is not clear as to how these parents will be empowered to make decisions that support their children.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant does meet Absolute Priority 1 based on the evidence provided in the application. While the information was not comprehensive, it was coherent enough to determine the district will develop personlized learning environments. However, the process for the development and implementation was not fully explained.

Additionally, enough information was provided in the narrative to determine that the district has begun to work on the four core areas with funding from the State of Georgia's RTT-3 grant award. For example, the district has compiled a list of programs and projects they have identified to address: (1) standards and achievement- because the applicant has adopted new English and Language Arts and Math standards incorporating the Common Core Standards to ensure mastery of the skills and knowledge needed for success beyond high school; (2) data systems to improve instruction-because the applicant is developing the an integrated data management system and assessment delivery platform that can be used to track student data; (3) great teachers, great leaders-because the applicant is developing a teacher and leader evaluation effectiveness system to track teacher performance that is linked to student achievement, and (4) turn around lowest achieving schools- because the applicant is providing low performing high schools subject matter and graduation coaches. While the applicant addressed the four core educational assurances, there is a lack of evidence to indicate the four core educational assurances have been aligned with a vision for reform.

Total	**210**	**141**