



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0038MD-2 for Board of Education of Baltimore County

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the applicant clearly articulates a comprehensive reform vision is appropriate. The vision identifies an overarching goal, a number of clearly stated objectives and strategies that, when completed, build upon the four core educational assurance areas. Through the proposed design of implementing a blended, personalized curriculum and a student-centered learning environment for all students, the applicant has convincingly articulated a clear and credible approach for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity. The vision describes how students will be supported via a combination of common and individual tasks that are based on the individual interests of each student. It further provides several student scenarios that illustrate how students and teachers participate in personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The approach taken by the applicant is to implement a reform proposal that proposes to change the culture of teaching and learning by revising middle school mathematics curriculum, creating a 21st century mathematics classroom, establishing career and college growth tools and professional growth and effectiveness plans, designing and evaluating a school-based implementation plan for the project SCOPE, and creating a health services partnership.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the applicant's approach to implementing the reform efforts is appropriate. The approach identified by the applicant is to target middle school grades, 6 to 8, and the subject area is mathematics. The applicant also describes the total high-need student population as the sum of all FARMS, LEP, and SPED students. A list of all the participating middle schools has been provided along with the number of participating students (all considered high-need), and the number of participating educators. The applicant is planning to serve 22,391 students and 1,686 educators and 46.2% of the participating students are considered low-income. Thus, this percent meets the low-income requirement.</p> <p>The implementation approach, as laid out by the applicant, is well articulated and should support high-quality LEA and school-level implementation. The proposed identification of schools coupled with the identification of eligible student groups will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of the proposed project even though the applicant did not articulate the process for how the applicant selected the schools for participation.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the applicant includes a high-quality reform and change plan is appropriate. The eight change efforts to be undertaken by the applicant demonstrate this proposed plan and is one that clearly identifies changes the project will implement as well as the expectations for improving student learning outcomes and for creating more highly effective educators. The plan describes a comprehensive reform and change road map, activities with appropriate rationale for each, and deliverables and responsible personnel for each of the eight reform efforts. Each change effort proposes a picture of the important destinations that clearly will lead to a significant scale up model for the entire BCPS system.</p> <p>Target areas in the proposed plan address revising the middle school mathematics curriculum and will target students in the 6-8 grades; however, there was no mention for how the applicant plans to scale up an LEA-wide reform and change project. The identified eight comprehensive reform strategies such as change for infrastructure, system changes, change for families, parents, and teachers, reflect a plan that will translate into a high-quality scale-up plan. For instance, within the system change effort, school system leaders developed benchmarks and minimum standards students should meet as they move throughout the Baltimore County Public Schools; thus ensuring students are making adequate progress toward</p>		

college and career readiness.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The evidence provided by the applicant somewhat demonstrates the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity. The applicant will determine proficiency status and growth by using summative assessments such as percent proficient or advanced on the Maryland School Assessment in mathematics and the percent of students passing the end-of-course Algebra High School Assessment test by the current passing score of 412. The applicant also includes some ambitious and achievable annual goals for the overall population and by subgroups. Targets have also been identified for each grade level, 6 to 8, for mathematics proficiency and for Algebra first time pass percentages, for decreasing the achievement gap, for graduation rates, and college enrollment were also identified for each of the participating schools. The applicant does not, however, provide comparisons for state targets consequently, it is not clear how ambitious their identified goals are.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant provides evidence indicative of having a clear track record of success and provides this by showing increases in graduation rates, improvements in student achievement, improved English language learner proficiency, increases in AP offerings and participation, and commitment to hiring, retaining and training highly qualified educators. This evidence has been provided in table format demonstrating six-year trend data.</p> <p>The applicant names numerous data systems (STARS, Cognos, BCPS data warehouse) as evidence for making student performance data available to all key stakeholders. Further, BCPS offers data analysis work sessions and training for educators and individual schools and assists content teams with analysis of data on a regular basis. For parents and students, BCPS provides access via grade reports, and data reports for all major state and national assessments. Also available to the public is school and statewide disaggregated data via the BCPS web site and state department of education web site.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide evidence to demonstrate reform efforts in persistently lowest-achieving schools or in low-performing schools; therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the applicant has a clear record of success for advancing student learning and achievement or for increasing equity within its lowest-achieving schools or its low-performing schools.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant provides a number of examples as evidence for providing transparency of its processes, practices, and investments. For example, it holds pre-budget meetings for administration and staff; online postings of the budget calendar, and an automated telephone calling system that invites families and employees to participate and submit comments. These scheduled meetings provide opportunities for all stakeholders to review the budget being proposed and all are given opportunities to provide substantive comments. A copy of the final budget is made available via the website and hard copy through the Office of Budget and Reporting. This includes information on instructional and noninstructional salaries and by individual schools. However, the evidence regarding the four categories is somewhat sketchy. Furthermore, the applicant does not clearly addresses how information on the four categories is transparently available.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The extent to which the applicant has provided evidence demonstrating the conditions and the autonomy under state law and state and county regulatory requirements is appropriate. Maryland law gives autonomy to BCPS which is clearly articulated in the policies and procedures governing the work of the Board of Education, the superintendent, and the school system. The Maryland constitution mandates to establish throughout the state a thorough and efficient system of</p>		

free public schools. Maryland law further gives BCPS the authority to carry out its vision for system-level change in the implementation of personalized learning for all students.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement is appropriate. This evidence includes an appropriate description of the process used to secure input, comments, and feedback from all key stakeholders. In particular, students actively participate in numerous activities and are asked to reflect and share thoughts about the approaches and methods of learning as well as about rating cognitive engagement. The students are also asked about whether these approaches meet their needs.

Direct engagement and support was sought from the BCPS collective bargaining group that represents all teachers. The applicant received a letter of support from the group. The applicant provides letters of support community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Community College of Baltimore County, Project Tomorrow and MD Learning Forward. Also included in the review process were several stakeholder support groups such as the PTA Council and the Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee.

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

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

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

The extent to which the applicant is proposing a high-quality plan for learning and teaching is appropriate. The proposed approach presented by the applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan that creates a blended learning environment along side the traditional classroom setting. The proposed plan provides sufficient detail to help understand how it will frame student learning in a blended learning environment including project based learning and integrating technology. Supporting evidence is given to demonstrate how students will be engaged in learning with a deep understanding for what is being taught and how their learning is linked with core standards and college and career-ready standards.

The high-quality plan includes goal, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible personnel. Further, the rationale for improving learning and teaching draws from a number of research-based models demonstrating a plan that is a framework for a high quality competency based learning environment for all students including the high-need students. These include a number of accommodations and strategies that include assisting teachers to customize the learning with the student.

The applicant provides appropriate evidence that describes the mechanisms to provide training and support and provides assurances that will help students understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them. This includes the necessary equipment, layout, and support to facilitate learning.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The extent to which the applicant proposes a high-quality plan for educators engaged in teaching and leading is appropriate. As in the model for personalized instruction for all students, the applicant provides a comprehensive high-quality teaching and leading plan that supports personalized professional learning opportunities for educators in multiple formats. The plan provides appropriate content that addresses how the plan supports: effective implementation by providing ongoing and sustainable professional development; support for adapting content and instruction through multiple formats, experiential learning opportunities, teacher collaboration, and involvement in the mathematics learning community. Through the experiential learning opportunities, educators will gain educator knowledge and understanding of multiple types of digital assets to differentiate and scaffold learning and increase student achievement. Teachers and principals will be evaluated using the Comprehensive Teacher and Principal Professional Growth and Performance Assessment System Guidelines.

The applicant also provides a high-quality plan that identifies multi-pronged learning approaches such as resource teacher positions and expert consultants to build teacher and administrator capacity, and access to differentiated professional development resources. To help educators match student needs, the applicant documents a plan for training educators in an effective teaching strategy to help meet the needs of all learners. The Universal Design for Learning training is to

influence the teaching and learning environment for providing multiple means of representation, providing multiple means of action and expression, and providing multiple means of engagement. This educator's capacity is assured through a training menu that will increase their ability to support student interest, choice, self-efficacy, and performance. Even though the Universal Design for Learning model and Goal 4 of the applicant's strategic blueprint might be seen as a plan that supports hard-to-staff schools, this alone does not satisfy the high-quality plan criterion.

Through the proposed teaching and leading plan, the applicant provides assurances for moving away from highly qualified educators to highly effective educators and introduces a high-quality plan with assurances to increase the number of students receiving instruction from highly effective teachers and principals. Through the Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency, teachers will receive culturally responsive instruction. It is through this lens coupled with the other training goals that the applicant supports school leaders in their efforts to assess and improve school culture and climate.

The applicant has provided a high-quality plan that includes goals, activities with appropriate rationales for each activity identified, timelines, deliverables, and responsible personnel.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The extent the applicant has provided a high-quality plan to support project implementation is appropriate. The applicant provides a diagram that demonstrates the commitment of leadership and central office support to principals and their schools. It includes policies and infrastructure with appropriate support and resources. The applicant provides information from the BCPS Blueprint 2.0 stressing the support and investment of resources and central office support to include providing assurances for creating a learner-centered, personalized, blended environment that is powered by digital resources and interactive curriculum.</p> <p>BCPS articulates a system that provides school-level leadership teams the autonomy and flexibility for creating schedules, offering elective courses, and who are given supportive environments to plan and create their own school implementation plans. However, the applicant never addresses in specific terms that school leaders are given flexibility and autonomy for the school-level budget or for school personnel decisions and staffing models.</p> <p>Opportunities for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery are well documented. The applicant provides examples of students receiving multiple opportunities and in multiple ways to master standards and progress. These examples include the using the CCSS, learning progression documents, and various PARCC documents. Additionally, teaching and learning assessments will be designed to also provide standards-based evidence. The applicant also describes how it will work with the departments of assistive technology and the digital learning to develop and integrate curriculum for students with varied learning styles and needs.</p>		

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

The applicant provides appropriate assurances regarding a commitment to provide access to all key stakeholders to necessary content, tools and other learning resources, both in and out of school, to support the implementation of the project. Assurances regarding access include teachers provided access to curriculum and digital curriculum resources through the current curriculum management, students accessing learning and safety resources through the student page, and all stakeholders can access able access links to the Teaching and Learning Framework, Instructional Digital Conversion, Second Language Acquisition, and CCSS and PARCC. Additionally, technical support is also provided by the Department of Technology. This support includes a call-in help desk, a newsletter where the school communicates with parents, a school web site, voice and email support; and the on-line tutorials for all key stakeholders on the use of all online databases. The explanation for providing information in an open data format is quite extensive when addressing information to students. However, the applicant did not address how parents will be given access to similar information in an easy to use format. Therefore, this area lacked information to fully assess compliance with this section.

The Office of Student Data provides and supports information systems for both the district and the schools to help create an efficient exchange and collection of student data. These include: the student information systems such as the student tracking and registration and student scheduling systems, the maintenance of data integration services, information systems administration and operational support. However, this evidence does not clearly demonstrate how each of these

systems would be interoperable data systems.

This evidence includes a high-quality plan and provides goals, activities, rationale for the activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible personnel (Appendix Y).

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant has provided a comprehensive high-quality plan that demonstrates a rigorous continuous improvement process with timely and regular feedback. The goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible personnel have been outlined in Appendix Y. As for providing timely and regular feedback, the applicant provides numerous examples of the communication and sharing processes for sharing, advocating, and promoting achievements. Examples of this are: utilizing the Department of Research, Accountability and Assessment to help monitor key metrics and grant implementation sanctities and reporting on progress through public records and meetings; designing a Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model to evaluate and improve instruction; and greater use of the digital media for two-way communications. Thus the evidence outlining how the applicant will monitor, measure and publicly share information is clear and appropriate. The proposed CIPP model and, in particular, the product evaluation will be used to guide the applicant in addressing continuous improvement efforts after the term of the grant. Specifically, the applicant proposes to address the impact, effectiveness, the sustainability of the project by supplying answers to eight research questions. Additional support for addressing long term progress after the grant will be provided via the summative evaluation findings.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant provides a detailed description of its high-quality communication and engagement plan for involving all internal and external stakeholders. This evidence includes installing numerous updates and changes to what is already in place. The plan outlines six areas to assist in the communication and engagement process: increasing the responsibilities of the Office of Communications, greater use of digital media, increasing opportunities for in-person dialogue, increased use of video, increased employee recognition opportunities, and standardization of presentations. Beyond this, the applicant proposes to build transparency at the school-level by visually displaying, communicating, and documenting progress of the school's action plans with all stakeholders.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The extent to which the applicant has provided ambitious and achievable performance measures targeting all students and subgroups (FARMS, SPED, LEP) is appropriate. Each of the measures includes the current situation and six year targets of future outcome. Additionally, by using the CIPP evaluation model, the applicant provides assurances for providing timely and actionable information such that evaluators and stakeholders will be provided systematic guidance for posing relevant questions and conducting assessments throughout the life of the project. Efforts to review and improve the measure over time, if it is insufficient to determine implementation progress, will occur by sharing data during leadership and principals' meetings. It is during these times that all will be asked to determine when and where improvements are needed. All data will be analyzed by the RTT leadership for the purpose of making course corrections and improvements. While the CIPP model coupled with these reviews are good evaluation tools for assessing progress, a more precise account for how the applicant plans to re-evaluate the performance measures overtime would have been more appropriate.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to evaluate effectiveness is appropriate. The applicant presents a comprehensive high-quality evaluation plan that will, when implemented, provide evidence of the effectiveness of the project and its funded activities. Using the CIPP evaluation model, the applicant outlines a concise and focused evaluation plan. In addition to the steps to be carried out via the CIPP model, the applicant also includes a logic model with an appropriate visual of the needs, activities, target groups, and outcomes.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The budget presented by the applicant identifies all the funds, RTT-D and external funds, is reasonable and is appropriate for the proposed investments and priorities. The applicant has identified 8 major projects that will support the proposed plan. Budgets for each of the 8 projects reflect all the appropriate line items with cost descriptions and justifications. The applicant has also identified the funds that are to be used as one-time investments and has provided strategies for what the applicant considers the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the applicant provides sufficient evidence to determine sustainability of the project is appropriate. Based on support from the educational community and community at large, the applicant provides an assurance for sustainability of the project after the term of the grant that includes fiscal, structural, and human capital resources from federal, state and local sources. Coupled with findings from the proposed CIPP evaluation plan, the applicant outlines for each of the 8 projects a concise plan to address the effectiveness of the investments and will use this data to inform future investments. Thus, the applicant proposes a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project goals that includes 8 project goals, activities and appropriate rationale for each activity, deliverables, timelines, and personnel responsible for carrying out the plan.</p> <p>The applicant describes several measures to address strategies and initiatives that will provide long term sustainability of the project goals. The applicant commits to institutionalize programs current funded by the grant; the commitment to changing the district philosophy and culture in support of the proposed project goals. Furthermore, the technology resources needed to support the project are in place with future funding commitments assured beyond the grant funding.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has identified a plan that supports a partnership with a continuum of health and mental health service organizations. The plan identifies a partnership with the Baltimore County Department of Health and the Department of Social Services to provide health care, social services and clinical counseling services. An additional partnership has been established with the Local Management Board to provide mental health training to school staff. Through a needs analysis, unmet needs were identified and recommendations were made for how to create more consistency with outcomes for the BCPS to develop a coordinated system of service delivery. The applicant also presents a set of strategies to address the needs with accompanying performance measures to assess progress.</p> <p>The applicant has outlined a comprehensive plan for addressing the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. However, a couple of weaknesses were noted. The partnership commitment via supporting letters or Memorandum of Understanding was lacking. Also, there was no mention for how parents and families were engaged in both the decision-making process or for addressing needs. The plan never once mentioned how teachers will engage the parents and families in helping find solutions. Even the work group assigned to address gaps in the current system did not address the need to involve parents and families in the decision-making process.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score

<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it expects to build on the core educational assurance areas thus creating learning environments designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. The applicant meets this Absolute Priority by targeting four major areas of change: curriculum development and curriculum delivery through a blended learning model; pedagogy in which learning is student-centered and teachers become facilitators of learning; the infrastructure that is needed to both develop and deliver curriculum digitally; and having a focus on career and college readiness for the most needy students. The applicant has also designed a high-quality learning and teaching plan that clearly demonstrates comprehensive strategies and activities that will prepare students for college and careers by providing appropriate tools and support aligned with college and career-ready standards for students and educators. The plan calls for having appropriate systems, processes and evaluation protocol that supports the acceleration of student achievement and learning and that will increase the effectiveness of educators. The plan also addresses ways for how achievement gaps will close across student groups and how students will graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>189</b>



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0038MD-3 for Board of Education of Baltimore County

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

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant provided a thorough explanation of their reform vision focusing on middle school mathematics preparation to help students reach college and career ready standards by passing Algebra I the first time it is taken in either eighth or ninth grade. The applicant stated that earning a grade of B or higher in eighth grade mathematics is a predictor of eventual college enrollment, based on a statistical analysis conducted in the district. This was then used as a proxy for a predictor for high school graduation.</p> <p>The applicant made reference to turning around the lowest performing struggling schools in the district, but no specific reforms that have been undertaken were specifically addressed in the application.</p> <p>The focus of instruction will change from teacher led to student centered with the use of personalized learning devices and software to allow students to work through curriculum at their own pace and demonstrating mastery at their own pace.</p> <p>The narrative of the proposal described typical school days for students and teachers. The teacher in the vignette had benefited from the increased professional development and as a result showed renewed motivation and engagement in teaching. The students in the vignettes were benefiting from the personalized learning environments and opportunities to participate in project based learning.</p> <p>Balancing the lack of attention to past efforts with the district's lowest performing schools with the included required components led high-range score awarded.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

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

The applicant met the requirements to support their approach to implementation by identifying characteristics of their school populations and subject area to be the focus of reform. A list of the twenty-seven middle schools in the district was included, and stated that collectively the schools have over 40% of their students receiving free and reduced meals, making the schools eligible for this grant. The total number of participating students was provided, including populations of high-needs students and students from low-income families.

The applicant did not include information about the process used to determine that the focus of the grant would be the middle school grade span. A brief description of the discussions held while developing the application led to a decision in June that mathematics would be the focus of the curricular reform of this grant. This was supported by the district's own research showing that earning a B or higher in eighth grade mathematics is an academic predictor of later enrollment in college.

The lack of a description of the process for selecting the participating schools balanced with the included required information regarding the schools and student populations led to the high-range score awarded.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant has included a narrative explanation of important components for LEA-change: infrastructure, increased involvement for students, parents and families, change for educators, change in curriculum development and pedagogy. The applicant included a detailed high-quality plan for implementation of the grant, if funded. The high-quality plan for implementation mainly addressed the grant funding period for the project outlined in the application. The high-quality plan provides enough detail and a timeline for the grant period to expect that the applicant will be able to reach the goals that have been laid out for improving the rates for successful completion of Algebra I.

The narrative makes reference in several places to scaling up the reforms to other schools in the district, specifically the one-to-one device plan and the availability of data to students, parents and educators, but details were not included in the form of a high-quality plan. A few references were included in the implementation plan to aspects that would reach past the grant implementation timeline. Most of these references were in regard to professional development.

The lack of high quality plan with goals, activities with rationale, deliverables, personnel responsible and projected timelines for scaling up the reform beyond the participating schools led to the high, mid-range score awarded.

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

**10**

**6**

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

The applicant included data and goals for each of the required areas in this section.

The summative assessments are appropriate for measuring the focus area of middle school mathematics; however no projected change was noted for the upcoming transition to consortia assessments to align with the Common Core State Standards. The applicant has referenced participation with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in portions of the application.

Goals are outlined for student outcomes on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The goals are largely ambitious and attainable. The overall goal for Grade 8 Mathematics proficiency is set at 80% of students scoring at proficient or above on the MSA, which measures only those 8th grade students not enrolled in Algebra I; however, this leaves 20% of the students not demonstrating proficiency of the prerequisite concepts and skills for Algebra I. No state data was provided for comparison to the district's results.

The data provided for decreasing achievement gaps is listed for each school as the difference between the highest-achieving subgroup and the lowest-achieving subgroup; which does not match the definition provided in the application materials of comparing the subgroups' achievement performance with statewide average performance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

The goal for increasing graduation rates is to improve the percentage of students graduating within four years from 82.89% in 2012-2013, to 85.92% in 2017-2018. While this increase would be reason for the district to celebrate, an increase of approximately one percent of students reaching graduation each year does not appear to be an ambitious goal, even in a district with as many students as this one. No information regarding state graduation targets were included for comparison.

The goal for increasing college enrollment for district graduates is to improve the percentage of graduates enrolling in

college from 63% in 2012-2013 to 67% in 2017-2018. This projection does not appear to be ambitious as it continues to leave a large percentage of students out of the opportunity to attend college. The connection the applicant has made between eighth grade mathematics grades and high school graduation was a statistical analysis of academic characteristics separating graduates who enroll in college from those who do not. The main goal of this proposal is to improve middle school mathematics curriculum and instruction to increase achievement in eighth grade, which would indicate an expectation of more than an increase of one percent of students enrolling in college each year. Perhaps the greatest growth will not come until after the grant period, giving the middle school students affected by the implementation of this project to graduate, which could have been addressed in the expectations of sustainability and results past the grant period. The district stated that this information is provided by the National Student Clearinghouse and is not disaggregated by subgroup. No data was provided to compare the district results with the state targets for graduation rates.

The lack of information regarding the transition away from the MSA for student achievement data and the incomplete information regarding student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation and college enrollment rates without any comparison to state achievement information led to the mid-range score awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

### (B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided descriptions, data and charts to demonstrate improvements made in the district in student achievement rates in elementary and middle school in reading and mathematics, graduation rates, Advanced Placement (AP) participation, 100% of high school graduates meeting the High School Assessment for graduation, and the percentage of highly qualified teachers in core academic subjects. Data regarding college enrollment was not included. This data provides an overall picture of a school district moving in a positive direction across grade spans over the past several years.

No specific past reform efforts were explained or identified, and specific low-achieving schools were not identified, nor their data provided to demonstrate the district's efforts in turning around low performing schools with ambitious and significant reforms.

Achievement data was provided for students from low-income families, ELL and Special Education populations, but not for any other subgroups. No state achievement data was provided for comparison.

This project is focused on helping students be prepared to pass Algebra I the first time students take the course. This goal suggests that there should be data to support the fact that a significant number of students need to retake Algebra I, but this data has not been included.

The applicant reported that families receive data reports with information regarding state and national comparison data. School and district disaggregated data is also available on the district website. Currently, there is no specific method in place for sharing data with students, but this goal will be addressed with the project in this proposal.

The missing information regarding past efforts to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in the district's lowest-achieving schools and the incomplete data to support closing achievement gaps led to the mid-range score awarded.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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### (B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative indicates that the district strives to be transparent regarding operations, particularly the budget process. An automated phone system is used to alert families of students and employees to participate in the budget process, and patrons can participate by attending meetings or by sending feedback online.

In order to facilitate better communication, the district has reorganized its communication office. The narrative also included information on including student feedback.

The applicant stated that instructional and non-instructional personnel salaries, as well as non-personnel expenditures, are available on the district website and in hard copy at the budget and reporting office, and is available at the school level.

The fact that the district has required transparency efforts in place and has made budget and expense information available to stakeholders led to the high range score awarded.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has provided information regarding state statute and board of education policy which grants the district the authority and jurisdiction over educational matters affecting the county. The Board of Education for the County of Baltimore is empowered to set policy to create a system of schools to provide quality education and equal educational opportunity to the children of the county. The county boards of education operate under the policies created by the General Assembly of Maryland.</p> <p>The applicant has provided evidence of district vision and reform through publications outlining their plans. These include their <i>Framework for Teaching and Learning</i>, their <i>Blueprint 2.0: Our Way Forward</i>, and <i>One to One Teaching &amp; Learning Device Initiative PreK-12</i>.</p> <p>The inclusion of evidence to support the district's successful conditions for implementation and autonomy under state requirements led to the high-range score awarded.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has included a narrative explaining a group of stakeholders who participated in the process of developing this application. Stakeholders involved included students, families, teachers, counselors, administrators, advisory groups and local business and higher education partners. The process was described as starting with a meeting which included middle school superintendents, so at the point of beginning with the stakeholders, the decision to focus on middle schools was already made, although the focus on mathematics emerged in June at a meeting with principals and assistant principals.</p> <p>Students participated in some sample curriculum problem-based, project-oriented mathematics challenges and were asked to reflect and share their feedback.</p> <p>The collective bargaining organization participated in a workshop last October about personalized learning environments. The organization made some recommendations to the grant process and demonstrated their support by signing the assurance statement in the grant.</p> <p>An impressive number of letters of support for the grant proposal were included in an appendix. The letters of support represent a variety of agencies and organizations including PTA, business partners, higher education partners, technology companies and professional organizations. The majority of the letters included identical language in parts of the text, making it challenging to know if the authors were supporting the grant as partners, or as interested stakeholders in the district, but all letters did express support for the initiatives to be implemented under the grant, if awarded.</p> <p>The inclusion of all requirements under this section led to the high-range score awarded.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has described key components of the learning strategies under this project in district middle school mathematics courses. The focus is on a hybrid curriculum process, with at least 20% of the content delivered face to face between the teacher and student. Students will also have the opportunity to work at their own rate by interacting with digital resources. Students will work on personalized dashboards to set goals for their learning and future plans, and their e-portfolios will include projects they choose to save for future use as well as data uploaded from formative and summative assessments. Working within the framework of the dashboards will help students focus on their own learning goals.</p> <p>The curriculum will include instructional activities and assessment developed specifically for the district, focusing on mathematical tasks as well as problem- and project-based instructional activities. The tasks will focus on specific</p>		

mathematical ideas and content, and will require higher-level thinking. The problem- and project- based activities will be embedded in read-world situations and emphasize the application of mathematical knowledge and skills. These activities will support student choice, providing the opportunity for students to be involved in deep learning activities in an area of interest, and the opportunity to work on academic content while also developing critical skills such as perseverance, critical thinking, goal setting, communication and problem solving.

A high-quality plan was included which addressed the required components of activities, timeline, deliverables (referred to as milestones in their plan) and parties responsible for the implementation of this project.

The high-quality plan for implementation did not specifically address access and exposure to diverse cultures, but aspects related to this are included in the district's publication, *Blueprint 2.0: Our Way Forward*, which is included in an appendix in the application.

The implementation plan did not include specific accommodations and high-quality strategies for assisting high-need students in meeting college and career ready standards and graduation requirements; however these have been addressed in the district's implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the publication *Framework for Teaching and Learning*, included in an appendix, which emphasizes "effective first instruction." The core of the framework is daily access to rigorous, relevant and responsive instruction. While the high-quality plan did not address the specifics of the accommodations, it did include the creation and implementation of "resources that address differentiated strategies, accommodations, modifications, culturally responsive teaching, student engagement, and best practices for personalized learning."

The plan includes attention to the details of the curriculum development and the implementation of the personalized device program. Milestones are included in the plan to use as benchmarks during the implementation.

Support and training will be available to students and parents to support their use of the digital system.

The focus on improving curriculum, providing access to data and a framework for students to set their own learning goals, the implementation of personalized learning environments which can provide access to individualized curriculum based on interests and achievement levels, as well as ongoing feedback, and the inclusion of training opportunities for parents and students, balanced with the areas not included in the high-quality plan but supported in the narrative, led to the high-range score awarded.

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

**20**

**18**

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

The applicant has described professional development opportunities for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals to incorporate a change in beliefs, approach and learning environment for students. They realize that the change in instructional delivery will be challenging and they are planning for professional development for everyone, as well as personalized opportunities for schools, teams or individual teachers to meet needs.

The district has plans to add a mathematics staff development teacher at each participating school to provide ongoing support to the educators in that building. The district also plans to hire two mathematics resource teachers to work with struggling teachers and teachers new to the district.

The district also has plans to partner with consultants and higher education partners to provide expertise and support to the educators.

The focus of the instructional change is on college and career readiness, as it relates to successful first-time completion of Algebra I. Increasing graduation rates is also listed as a goal of the grant. The connection between passing Algebra I successfully leading to graduation is based on an analysis of academic characteristics completed in the district and compiled in their *College/Workforce-Ready Pathway or Trajectory*, referenced in the application.

Increasing the number of effective teachers and principals is referenced throughout the discussion of professional development. The updated evaluation systems are mentioned, but not specifically defined as to how they will attract and retain effective educators in high needs areas, of which mathematics is likely included. While not included in the form of a high-quality plan, development of a recruitment plan is included in the district's *Blueprint 2.0: Our Way Forward*, included in an appendix of the application.

A high-quality plan is included which includes milestones for development and implementation of professional development modules, personalized learning dashboards and personalized device program implementation. Training and implementation of the personalized learning devices and programs is included for school leadership, counselors and educators. Professional Development opportunities will be included for all educators and school leadership members.

The inclusion of the high quality plan for the development and support of teachers under this program, balanced with the omission of a high-quality plan for increasing student access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals led to the high-range score awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant is a large district and structure is an important part of the organization to support schools. There is a school support system in place in the district already offering support from curriculum and instruction, assistant superintendents and business services. The district has a plan for support for principals in supporting improving student achievement. Their <i>Blueprint 2.0-Our Way Forward</i>, included in an appendix, documents this support system which is already in place and will provide support to school leadership teams in participating schools to support the project implementation.</p> <p>Schools within the district have been granted autonomy to be instructional leaders. This autonomy allows them to handle their own staffing issues, curricular decisions when enrollment is low for specific courses, including encouraging enrollment in online courses, and the ability to plan, create and implement their own site implementation plans. These include allowing extra class periods for students who need additional support, personalized professional development plans, and offering extended day and extended year options for students. Seven middle schools have implemented specialty magnet programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and the arts. Scheduling is an area that schools control, but calendar decisions have not been delegated to individual schools. Schools have some decision making power in regard to their site based budgeting process. Being able to control staffing, professional development, course scheduling and extended day and year opportunities appears to allow sufficient autonomy for school leadership to implement the components of this proposal at each middle school site.</p> <p>The applicant is looking forward to using personalized learning environments to provide students opportunities for "just in time" assistance in content instruction and to be able to demonstrate mastery of content. While mastery was discussed as being done on an individual basis through Universal Design for Learning and as an important component of the personalized learning environment, it was not explained or made clear whether students could earn course credit in an alternate manner than traditional course length and completion for advanced or accelerated placement. Credit recovery was discussed. The district plans to use PARCC's detailed explanations of five performance level descriptors. These provide information about the knowledge and skills that an assessment item or task elicits from students. The applicant stated that this focus is in line with the National Mathematics Advisory Panel's definition of proficiency.</p> <p>The district has already started the process of implementing Universal Design for Learning and plans for this approach to make curriculum accessible to all students.</p> <p>The applicant provided a high-quality plan to outline implementation of the project and major milestones to measure the process. While the high-quality plan does not specifically address opportunities to demonstrate mastery, the focus on personalized learning environments supports the inference that the district's focus will be on self-paced instruction, which would be inline with multiple methods of demonstrating mastery.</p> <p>The included components balanced with the lack of detail of opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways led to the high-range score awarded.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided a high-quality plan to support the implementation of the project outlined in the proposal.

They have outlined the availability of content and instructional online resources for administrators, teachers, students and parents. The district has included relevant information in their high-quality plan.

The district is in the process of implementing a Comprehensive Instructional Management System to integrate this available online content with student grades for access by parents and students. The process of implementing the rollout of the personal devices will include internet access for families who need assistance affording the data plan.

The district offers infrastructure and support to schools, educators and students through a Department of Information Technology, which can be called for assistance. The information technology personnel also visit each school weekly.

Data is available to students and families in open data format to be downloaded. The Office of Student Data handles multiple data reporting requirements and systems, but no specific claims of interoperable data systems was described in the proposal.

Balancing the included and omitted components of this section resulted in the high-range score awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant discussed ongoing monitoring and data collection during the implementation of the project. The district has a continuous improvement process in place, which will be used for for ongoing timely and regular feedback on the progress. The process is Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP), an evaluation model for improving education. The high-quality plan included refers to ongoing aspects of each activity in a general sense. In some cases there are large time spans of a year or more, which lack detail for implementation which could be overlooked. There are a few timelines in the plan which extend into the year past grant funding, but not enough to consider that the plan supports ongoing correction and improvement following the grant period. The deliverables for this process are not laid out in the plan, but the fact that the district already has a continuous improvement process in place is a clear benefit in expecting the plan to be implemented and adjusted as necessary during the process. The CIPP model includes frequent and ongoing communication within the evaluation team, but not publicly; however part of the complete communication plan includes the development of a Department of Communication and Community Outreach which will share information with family and community stakeholders.</p> <p>The components represented from the requirements, balanced by the details lacking in the high-quality plan, resulted in the high-range score awarded.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant included plans for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders in their high quality plan for project implementation. The district will expand their Office of Communications into a larger Department of Communications and Community Outreach to handle community outreach, marketing campaigns, a communications advisory group, and a Parent University to help guide parents as the first teachers of their children. The district has increased digital communication tools online with blogs and twitter. The goal is that all stakeholders will experience clear, timely, honest, transparent, and widely available communication about district programs and events. In person dialogue opportunities are also increasing with a Parent Advisory Council, a Superintendent's Community Engagement Advisory Committee, a Student Advisory Committee, and community meetings and forums scheduled with the superintendent. For the current school year, ten of these such meetings have been scheduled, providing time to have dialogue at least once a month during the school year. While the sole purpose of these varied communication plans is not focused solely on the project included in this proposal, having these communication models in place will be a valuable foundation to be sure stakeholders are involved in the process in a meaningful way.</p> <p>The variety of communications described in the narrative and included in the high-quality plan led to the high range score awarded.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district has identified a variety of academic assessments to measure the outcomes of their project, which is focused on improving student pass rates for Algebra I.</p> <p>The applicant has included state testing results for sixth-eighth grade students on the mathematics assessment and for eighth and ninth graders on the Algebra I assessment' with no discussion of this summative assessment being converted over to a new assessment to meet college and career standards through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for</p>		

College and Careers (PARCC) assessment within the next year or two. The narrative of the proposal referred to transitioning to the PARCC assessments, but this transition was not reflected in any of the goals for these performance measures.

The applicant included course grades in a required health course as a measure of students' readiness to become independently well-balanced individuals. Ongoing monitoring will prove if this is an effective predictor of future behavior.

Grades are used in mathematics courses as a predictor of future college enrollment, supported by a statement that earning a "B" or higher in mathematics increases graduation rates, based on the district's analysis of of academic characteristics leading to college enrollment.

Goals set are ambitious, with most goals being set for increases of 10-20% more students performing at the desired level. Although some of the final proficiency levels may not be at desired levels, the goals are likely achievable and realistic.

The application did not address how the applicant will review and improve the performance measure if it is not effective in measuring the outcomes of the project, although the district already has an ongoing evaluation process in place, Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP), so it would be reasonable to expect that they will be prepared to use that process to evaluate the implementation of these performance measures.

The omission of a specific plan to review and improve these performance measures led to the high-range score awarded.

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

**5**

**4**

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

The narrative includes the components of a high-quality plan, identifying research questions, data points and timelines for collecting data throughout each school year to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Additionally the evaluation plan is included in the applicant's high quality plan.

One of the research questions is, "What has been the record of completion of the Algebra I course the first time it is attempted?" This appears to be a question that would have already been answered in choosing the curricular focus of this project proposal, but will continue to be analyzed through the evaluation process.

The evaluation will be handled in an ongoing process with the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model. This process will involve all stakeholders in the district and will evaluate all components of the project implementation.

This plan seems to be aimed at the major components of the project using a model already in place in the district. The CIPP Model is embedded in the process, creating a seamless evaluation as part of the implementation of the project.

While the evaluation plan did not include all components of a high-quality plan (Personnel responsible include references to "the evaluator" or "the team"), the overall quality of the plan led to the high-range score awarded.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

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

The funding is organized by year and identified by one time/first year expenses versus expenses which will continue throughout the grant. Estimates seem reasonable for the geographic area for hiring personnel and purchasing the identified equipment.

The devices purchased were estimated to last 4-5 years each. The materials purchased include desks to accommodate the technology purchases, laptops, and white boards. The justification for the white boards is that they are to replace outdated bulletin boards and chalk boards in classrooms. This purchases seems that it would come from district funds rather than grant funding. Additional purchases include mathematics software and the development of curriculum and interventions. The budget proposal included hiring personnel and contracted personnel to implement the project. The budget proposal included items which supported the project goals and outcomes.

The applicant addressed the sustainability of each of the eight included projects in the proposal narrative. The salaries for the staff development teachers and the mathematics resource teachers are stated to be paid out of district operating funds

and that will make these positions sustainable. However, these positions are listed in the grant proposal for the first four years, creating a large expense to be transferred to district operating funds. The technology purchased will be integrated into the district inventory, and into their maintenance schedule. Transferring these large expenses to the district operating funds could be a challenge, but the district states that they are prepared for it.

Additional funds are included in the total budget, which are identified as LEA operational funds and state Race to the Top funding.

Inclusion of the required components of this section balanced with the inclusion of the white board purchases here instead of within the district's budget and the concern of integrating the large number of technology devices into the district inventory with costs of upkeep led to the high-range score awarded.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant has included descriptions in the narrative regarding sustainability of each of the programs in their proposal. While this narrative supports important factors for each of the projects included in the proposal, it does not meet the definition of a high quality plan. There is a high-quality plan outlining implementation of the project, but it addresses the grant-funding period, with only a few of the entries addressing timelines for up to one year after grant funding, presenting a plan that does not adequately address the sustainability of the plan. While the narrative does not provide specifics for the amount of funding necessary to continue each project, this section of the narrative does include references to sources for funding the ongoing efforts to sustain the projects in the proposal, including district operating funds, Title II-A funding for professional development, and third-party billing and access to health care reform initiatives to sustain the health services partnerships

No specific information was included documenting support from state and local government leaders.

The largest outlay of funding is for personalized technology devices, which will be included in district inventory. The intent is to use operating funds to work these devices into the district's three year refresh cycle. Funds have been set aside this year to have in place for that process.

Personnel for the grant is another large expenditure which could be challenging to keep in place following the grant period; however, the application states that the district is prepared for this cost.

The effects of the professional development provided during the grant will remain with teachers who are retained in the system, so a retention plan as referenced in the *Blueprint 2.0: Our Way Forward* included in an appendix will be critical.

The lack of a high-quality plan outlining the sustainability of the project after the term of the grant balanced with the inclusion of the information referenced led to the mid-range score awarded.

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

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

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's competitive preference priority plan included hiring social workers to intervene with students, and their families, who are having attendance and/or discipline referrals with the goal of reducing the behavior and increasing their academic achievement. Partnerships are already in place. This project would add six social workers and a health services specialist to oversee this response to intervention program. The partnerships are with community mental health agencies, the county department of health, the department of social services, and the local management board. The application states that these partnerships are already formalized in Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs), but those were not included in the application. These partnerships will focus on assisting students with mental health issues, with the goal of improving academic achievement.

The applicant has identified three performance measures: increasing attendance rates, decreasing suspensions, and increasing readiness for graduation (measured by earning a B or higher in eighth grade mathematics, stated to be a predictor of graduating from high school). The students referred to this programs have not previously been identified in order to be able to have their progress tracked, so no baseline data is available to report or to use to project goals. As a result, there is no way to evaluate whether the plans are ambitious or achievable.

Parents are included as an important part of the process, but the proposal did not include details of how they would be involved in the decision making process.

Balancing the included required components with those that were not included or fully developed led to the mid-range score awarded.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant has met this absolute priority by remaining focused on their project goals throughout the application. The focus of this project is on improving college and career readiness through improved teaching and learning of middle school mathematics. A great deal of information regarding professional development for administrators, educators and paraprofessionals was included in the proposal, but the plans did not specifically relate to an increase in effective and highly effective teachers and principals as defined in the application. Students in middle school will be given the opportunity to participate in personalized learning through digital devices and software to help meet students' needs in improving mathematics achievement, with the goal of increasing the number of students who successfully complete Algebra I the first time that they take the class. The goals include decreasing achievement gaps, but the projected goals were all based on the current state summative assessment results, without addressing the transition to the PARCC assessments over the next two school years.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>177</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0038MD-4 for Board of Education of Baltimore County

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

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant articulates clearly the reform vision for the Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) Student-Centered Opportunities for Personalized Education (SCOPE) project.</p> <p>This approach has a focus on six objectives which include both increasing graduating students who are college and/or career ready and addressing improvement of mathematics curriculum and teaching and learning in the mathematics areas. The project is divided into eight separate projects which address the six objectives and include a focus on professional growth for teachers and personalized learning for students.</p> <p>Two additional elements of this project are the one-to-one student-to-device program and a strong guidance program to support students with high needs. The project also includes extended day and year options for students who need</p>		

support. These student efforts are based on student academic and career interests.

The applicant provides a vignette that describes clearly what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in the personalized learning environments. The vignette demonstrates the blended classroom approach that is part of this project's implementation. For example, a student named Joe will have benefits of one-on-one conferencing with his math teacher and his counselor to address his individual needs. This conference provided support for the use of adaptive instructional software programs and a group of students working on "real life" math problems.

The applicant articulates a comprehensive and cohesive reform vision for this project. There were no weaknesses identified; therefore a high ranking was given for this section.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant uses a school demographic chart to list the schools that will participate in the implementation of the project. Those schools will include the middle schools in the district which have 40% or more FARMS (Free and Reduced Meals Students) in their programs. The list includes the number of participating students as well as the identified high needs students and the educators that will be serving those populations. This indicates the extent to which the applicant is implementing its reform proposal.

Although the applicant included the identifying numbers of participating students, the description of the process of the selection of schools was not complete. It is not clear why the preparation for Algebra I was selected as a focus of the project. Because of this lack of clarity a medium score was given for this section.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant does include in a high-quality plan for LEA-wide reform and change activities by providing supportive objectives, timelines and persons responsible for the activities. The milestones also provide a focus for the project's success. For example, one of the milestones is to have students at all 27 schools using the mathematics resources and online assessments within 100 days during the first year of the project. These efforts support meaningful reform within the selected school and grade levels.

The applicant provides for scaled up efforts beyond the elements of the project that focus on the middle school and ninth grade math curriculum. For example, the scaled up efforts include changes in infrastructure to include full integration of assessment, content development and management, social and emotional supports, community resources, academic interventions and professional development to support personalized learning. The system-wide scaled up efforts will include the use of a technology portal that integrates existing systems into a single point of entry that will give teachers access to student-level data.

Although the applicant provides for scaled up changes, the applicant does not provide a clearly defined high-quality plan to address the scale up process. Without the data regarding the timelines and deliverables for the scaling up of this project, it is not clear if the project goals will expand to students in other grade spans in the school district.

The applicant uses a comprehensive review of what types of changes will be occurring for all of the stakeholders. This includes a virtual learning portal, Naviance, that will provide 24/7 data and information.

One of the needs identified in the BCPS SCOPE Project Logic Model and the BCPS SCOPE Reform Plan is to: "address population that is diverse, mobile and with high needs." This element appears to stand alone and is not specifically linked to activities and target groups. It is not clear how the applicant plans to "address" the population. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how this need statement, if addressed, will improve student learning outcomes for all students. This is lack of connection is a minor weakness; therefore this section remains in the high range on the rating scale.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant does not provide information regarding how the proficiency scores relate to the state ESEA targets for the LEA. Without this information it is more difficult to determine the ambitiousness of the annual goals.

Based on the data available, it appears that the goals set for the summative assessments are both ambitious and achievable. For example, the Grade 6 Mathematics Proficiency Goal to move all sixth grade students from the baseline of 75.5% proficient or advanced on state measures of mathematics to 82.0 % proficient or advanced on state measures of mathematics in one year appears ambitious as the previous year there was a drop from 79.9 to 75.5 in comparable scores.

The applicant provides clear data regarding the baseline and goals for decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment data. These goals appear to be both ambitious and achievable. For example, the math achievement gap between white and ELL students at Sudbrook Magnet Middle School will decrease from 44.9 to 24.5 percentage points during the grant cycle.

Due to the missing comparison of the data with the state targets, this section has been given a score in the medium range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has provided evidence of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching as the charts in this section indicate. For example, the eighth grade science proficiency score indicates an increase for all students in both the larger group and the identified sub groups.</p> <p>The applicant provides clear data regarding the successes that the district has had regarding increases in graduation rates to the second-highest in the nation. The baseline data provided indicates an overall growth in graduation rates from 81.81% to 83.83%.</p> <p>Although the applicant does not provide solid data on the number or percentage of students attending college after high school, the applicant indicates that more BCPS students are reporting their intentions to attend college after high school.</p> <p>The applicant includes methods that are currently used to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. These efforts currently use a variety of data systems.</p> <p>The applicant does not identify methods for addressing reforms in its current persistently lowest-achieving or low-performing schools. Due to this missing information it is difficult to determine if issues for those schools have been addressed. Due to this missing data, the section was given a medium rating.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant clearly indicates a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments by providing budget documents on the BCPS web site. This data includes information on instructional and non-instructional salaries and budget information by school. The budget information includes both operating and capital expenditures. The applicant supports transparency in a clearly developed communication plan that encourages transparency and community and public involvement.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Through the Maryland state laws and the policies established by the Board of Education of Baltimore County, the LEA has demonstrated sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments as described in the proposal.</p> <p>The Annotated Code of Maryland specifies that "Education matters that affect the counties shall be under the control of a county board of education" and "Each county board shall seek in every way to promote the interests of the schools under its jurisdiction."</p> <p>The district policies clearly identify the role of the Superintendent as he or she has the responsibility and authority to direct the work of all school employees.</p>		

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The LEA has demonstrated clear evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. Beginning at the "vision" stage of the proposal, local constituents including students were involved in the process. This is a strength in that it provides for both input into the grant proposal and buy-in by the stakeholders.</p> <p>The Collective Bargaining unit appears to have been involved at the development stages of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant includes ample letters of support from key stakeholders that are included in the appendix. Although some of those letters were "form" letters, they do show support for the programs that are being developed by the LEA to address individual personalized learning at the middle school level. These letters include support from stakeholders such as an Associate Professor from West Virginia University, the president of the University of Maryland's Training Center, Chairman of the St. John Properties Board, and Chief Executive Officer of the nonprofit organization, Project Tomorrow. These letters of support from stakeholders are from a variety of backgrounds including student and community-based organizations.</p> <p>Due to the strong involvement of stakeholders, this section has a high rating.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a well-developed high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. This plan includes a blended approach to instruction. This includes a personalized approach using online learning as well as in-class work. The BCPS SCOPE Project Plan includes activities, objectives, timelines, milestones, and persons responsible for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment.</p> <p>The applicant addresses specifically how a rigorous course of study will be aligned to the curriculum. Those elements included are: application, conceptual understanding, and procedural skill and fluency. These are excellent examples of involving the learner in a more rigorous environment.</p> <p>In creating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Middle School Curriculum, the LEA is providing a clear link between the college- and career-ready graduation requirements and student learning.</p> <p>To address students' understanding that what they are learning is key to their success, the applicant is implementing the Fixed and Growth Mindset concept. This concept is based on Carol Dweck's research. According to her research, students who have a fixed mindset believe intelligence is a trait that cannot be changed and that intelligence or talents are effortless. Also according to her research, in the growth mindset people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Moving students from the Fixed Mindset to the Growth Mindset will help students to view their own learning as they apply metacognitive skills.</p> <p>To provide for support from the parents in addressing the personalized instruction, the applicant indicates that parents will have access to a parent portal that will include individual student progress reports as well as sets of strategies that work specifically for their own children.</p> <p>The applicant is providing in the plan a variety of high-quality instructional environments including extended day and extended year opportunities for students. These efforts would include methods of programming to meet individual needs and interests.</p> <p>The applicant uses three major projects to address individualized learning. Those projects include Creation of 21st Century Mathematics Classroom, Career and College Growth Tool and Development of World Class 21st Century Middle School Math Curriculum. These elements appear to be addressing the scope of the proposed project.</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students and their parents to assure that they understand how to use the tools and resources that will be used to track and manage their learning. This training will include Back-to-School Nights for parents.</p>		

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant includes in the high-quality plan specific efforts to provide for quality staff development during staff development training sessions and support for teachers through easily accessible professional learning modules. These modules will assist educators to have the information available when they need it for implementation into their classrooms.

The LEA has begun work on the teacher and principal evaluation system for the district. The district's Principal Leadership Support includes a mentoring component that will provide for increased job-embedded professional learning. As outlined in the Comprehensive Teacher Professional Growth and Performance Assessment System and Comprehensive Principal Professional Growth and Performance Assessment System, feedback during the evaluation conferences will be essential.

This SCOPE project has a three-leveled approach to professional learning. This includes "System-wide" for all mathematics educators. "School Based" for teams to meet the needs of their students and teachers and "Individual Offerings" for each teacher to access. This appears to be a comprehensive approach to provide for instruction for all educators.

To accommodate the goals of the participating educators, the district plans to provide high quality resources including the Digital Resource Library. These resources will provide support for teachers to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready goals. The professional development plan also includes culturally responsive instruction for educators. These instructional resources will assist teachers to implement mathematics curriculum that is responsive to the needs of individual students.

The project includes a newly created school-based staff development teacher position that will be specifically assigned to work with the middle school mathematics personalized learning initiative.

The applicant includes a plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals as they move from "highly qualified" to "highly effective". This is accomplished through the improved teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Although the applicant identifies that the district has a long-term recruitment and staffing strategy to attract a diverse and high performing work force, the applicant does not provide for a high quality plan for increasing the number of teachers for hard-to-staff positions. This may be an issue in providing for highly effective teachers in the field of math as that subject area may be hard-to-staff.

The applicant provides a thoroughly developed action plan for learning and teaching that should provide this project with success.

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

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

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

The applicant includes a clear picture of the organization chart that depicts how the LEA central office provides different levels of support and services as the school buildings need. This includes the commitment of leadership to maximize student achievement. The Differentiated-Tiered School Support Model is part of the organization's effort to provide support for schools that need the support and at what level. If a school building is in need of more services, a higher involvement of the central office staff and more resources are extended to accomplish the goals of the school and the district. This effort should facilitate addressing schools with the most need as the new efforts based on this grant begin.

The applicant indicates that the school-based leadership teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy to address the needs of this project.

The applicant indicates that the PARCC assessment will be used to provide guidance in assisting in measuring students' level of performance in mathematics.

The applicant indicates that the district will use the Universal Design for Learning and the arrangement with Center for Applied Special Technology to provide for expanded learning opportunities to master content in multiple ways and times.

This appears to be an effective approach to student learning and assessment.

The applicant includes some accessible resources and instructional practices for student with special needs. Another element of the grant will be to develop the process of implementing Universal Design for Learning as it applies to students with special needs.

To further address Mastery of Content, the applicant indicates that multiple opportunities will be used to have students demonstrate their level of performance of the standards. Those will include the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) Model Content Frameworks and Task Prototypes documents, learning progression documents, and curriculum-based Performance Assessments. Through these processes the district is providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their level of performance of standards.

The applicant provides a high-quality plan to support the LEA Policy and Infrastructure.

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

The applicant outlines current services that are available to all participating students, parents and educators. These supports are available through the current websites and linked to outside resources as well. These efforts will be expanded by this project to address more specifically the individualized instruction.

The project is supported by the Department of Information Technology and includes through the Department of Digital Learning, online tutorials. These efforts appear to be appropriate for this expanded project.

The applicant's plan includes the assurance of an open format for student easy access. This is supported by their network-based technology resources which is part of the district's One to One Teaching & Learning Device Initiative Pre K-12. These resources include a Student Information System, a data warehouse for the business elements of the district and the electronic online Measures of Academic Progress testing. This district also provides parents' access to their student's academic information.

Although the applicant indicates that the Office of Student Data within the district provides for interoperable data systems, the applicant does not provide for specific information as to what technology supports that interoperable and open data system.

The applicant has developed a high quality plan to address access to content, tools and resources.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The district appears to have in place an effective method of monitoring and measuring the success of programs such as the SCOPE project. This includes the work through the Department of Research, Accountability and Assessment. The plan includes the use of the Context, Input, Process, and Product Model (CIPP) . This appears to be appropriate for the continuous improvement of the SCOPE project.

Within the BCPS SCOPE Project Plan, the applicant identifies frequent and timely feedback. For example, every two weeks teacher leaders will facilitate collaborative planning sessions using the PLMs as a focus of the professional learning. Teams will determine look-fors and measurement data.

The applicant had provided a high-quality plan for implementing rigorous, continuous improvement.

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

The district under the direction of the current superintendent appears to have a strong communication plan. That plan will expand under this grant project to include an expansion of the Office of Communication, greater use of digital media, more opportunities for in-person dialog, increased use of video and a standardization of the presentations. These efforts appear to be comprehensive in nature.

The applicant includes in the Communication Plan the goals, objectives and key actions that will support ongoing communication and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders. The BCPS SCOPE Project Plan includes the timelines and the persons responsible for the communication plan. These efforts support a high-quality plan as defined in the notice for this grant.

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

The performance measures used for this project appear to be both ambitious and achievable. For example, to address the increase in percentage of students with highly effective and effective teachers and principals, the applicant indicates increases from 2% to 15% over the course of the grant.

The applicant has identified the rationale for some of the performance measures. For example, the final grade in Grade 8 math was selected as a predictor of success.

The applicant did clearly address all the required performance levels.

Although the review of the measurements over time is part of the CIPP evaluation process that is used by the district and the product evaluation includes coordination of the collection of product evaluation information, the applicant does not provide specific data as to how these measures will be re-evaluated during the implementation stages.

Due to the missing data, this section has been ranked at a medium level.

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

The applicant indicates that the evaluation model that will be used is the Context, Input, Process, Product Model (CIPP). This model will provide for both formative and summative evaluations. The applicant includes in the narrative the persons responsible for the activities involved in the evaluation process. The Logic Model included in the application includes activities and outcomes.

The CIPP model is used for both the continuous improvement section and the evaluating effectiveness of investments section. That appears to be effective as the model appears to have worked for the district in the past and could be applied to both continuous improvement and evaluation.

The applicant makes evaluation a major issue since it is one of the eight projects for this grant request.

The district proposal provides a high-quality plan that should rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD funded activities.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

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

The applicant provides a clear description of the funds that will be used for the seven major elements of the plan as well

as the Health Services Partnership that is identified by Competitive Preference Priority.

The breakdown of the cost description and justification for each of the eight elements appears to be reasonable and sufficient.

The applicant does provide clear description of all funds used for support of the proposal projects. This supports the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

Some of the items for the improvement of the mathematics classroom including the mounted dry-erase boards may be more suited for district infrastructure funds.

Overall the budget provides strong support for the completion of the project; therefore, this section has a high rating.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant addresses each of the eight projects with information regarding sustainability. The plans include activities that are sustainable and activities that will be completed during the grant cycle. For example, for Project 1: "Development of World Class 21st Century Middle School Mathematics Curriculum," the applicant indicates the plan is to have the math curriculum writing completed as part of the implementation of the SCOPE project and then the plan is to use instructional tools, resources, content and assessments for all schools, teachers, and students at the conclusion of the grant funding. The applicant completes this process for each of the eight projects.

The applicant indicates that the evaluation plan will include making decisions based on the effectiveness of the grant's investments.

The applicant does provide a high quality plan in the BCPS SCOPE Project Plan document. This includes activities, objectives, timelines, milestones, and persons responsible. The applicant also supports this plan regarding sustainability within the narrative.

This project plan appears to support the sustainability of the project after the grant cycle is completed.

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

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

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides a comprehensive description of current and future partnerships that will support the plan as described in Absolute Priority 1. For example the partnership with the Baltimore County Department of Health appears to be both long standing and comprehensive.

The applicant indicates that MOU's were formalized for this part of the project; however, these are not included in the application. Without this information or letters of support from these organizations it is difficult to determine if the proposed connections will occur.

The applicant includes three population-level desired results that align with the population to be served by the broader RTTD application.

The applicant does not define the population-level desired results targets that are specific to family and community supports. Therefore, there is not a clear linkage to the family and community supports.

The applicant does describe how the social workers will track the indicators and make decisions based on those results.

The applicant does not develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students.

The project provides for a specialist position that will be established to coordinate the behavioral health care efforts. This position will help to address the goals and objectives set by this part of the project and provide for integration of education and other services.

Although the applicant identifies in a general manner which students will be receiving services, it is not clear how specific students will be chosen for services and how parents and families will be participating in this effort.

The applicant does not provide data for the interventions identified as Tier 2 or Tier 3, therefore it is difficult to determine if the annual goals are ambitious or achievable.

Due to the lack of supportive data this section was ranked at the medium level.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Throughout the application, the district has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build eight clearly defined projects. The use of individual instruction in the middle school math program will address the personalization of learning and teaching and support the improvement of student achievement and increase the effectiveness of educators. The applicant clearly addresses decreasing achievement gaps across student groups. The teaching and learning activities will provide for accelerated student achievement and deepen student learning. The plan for evaluation of educators will produce more effective and more highly-effective teachers and administrators. Due to these efforts the absolute priority is met.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>185</b>
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