



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0070TN-1 for Bristol City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They describe their five major goals, but there is not a clear description of how all of these are aligned with and/or build upon the four Race core assurance areas. Two assurances (Recruitment and turnaround lowest achieving schools) are undocumented (A.1.a). There is a major focus on middle schools, but their vision and goals do not sufficiently address how their personalized environment will be carried out in high school classrooms (A. 1c).</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four of the five goals are appropriate and comprehensive and support their vision. • They provide an ambitious and comprehensive summary of twelve specific strategies for implementing personalized learning. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 4 has a statement that they “will include never before seen ways to reach out to every parent”. This does not instill confidence that their vision and at least one goal may not be sufficiently comprehensive and evidence-based • An entire page (8) is devoted to statewide literacy needs and little is presented in this section about the literacy needs of the applicant LEAs • Little is stated about their HS reform vision, other than there will be on-line coursework • Their description of what classroom experiences will be like (A 1 c) focuses more on various structural changes that will occur in the middle school (i.e., Intervention specialists, professional development, etc.) 		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 45 schools are named as participants. The overall low-income percent is: 63.4% and supports that the schools collectively meet the criteria (A 2 a). • The project vision is to impact elementary and middle schools and this is documented. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for selecting the participating schools is unclear • Several of the schools (Appx. 5) do not have significant low income student populations; the low income percent at some schools are only 11, 29, 32, 27, and 39. This raises a question whether all of the identified schools meet the USDE high need definition. • The fact that very few of the project schools are high schools raises questions as to how well they will be able to meet their Goal 3: college and career readiness. <p>Because there are significantly more strengths than weaknesses, the score for this criterion is in the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p>		

- A thorough description is included of how the proposed reforms (i.e., personalized learning plans, RTI, math and literacy interventionist specialists, technology, professional development plans, seminars, etc.) will impact the schools.
- They articulate the intent to implement LEA-wide plans that will build a collaborative assessment process. It includes over 20 specific activities, a solid rationale and outcomes.
- They will partner with East Tenn. State Univ. Because the university faculty have extensive expertise in educational research and effectiveness, their expertise will enhance the implementation of LEA-wide reforms.

Weaknesses:

- A high quality plan (per USDE definition) is not clearly presented that describes how the building and classroom reforms will be scaled up to support district-wide change.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant does not provide a complete and comprehensive vision with ambitious and achievable goals for the following reasons cited below:

Strengths:

- The plan to expand ACT Explore College Readiness benchmarks in the 8th grade is a strength because it is a research-based strategy related to college readiness.
- Performance measures for summative state assessments are included and achievable. For example, the Grades 5-8 math and English are based on state testing predictions.

Weaknesses:

- They do not appear to set any clear ACT targets for participating grade 8 student sub-groups.
- No clear performance measures were located for LEA-wide graduation rates
- The annual goals for the state subject matter performance measures are not ambitious because they are only about 1 percent annually.
- Data for college enrollment rates appear to be missing.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
Strengths:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable data and discussion about the track record of 15 school districts participating in the NETCO consortium which was supported by a USDE Innovation grant. 		
Weaknesses (criteria a, b and c)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear how or whether the six Race applicant LEAs were involved in the NETCO project and what the linkage is to this criterion and/or the Race proposal. • The NETCO data does not include 4 years of past student outcomes • Information for college enrollment per each participating LEA was not located. • Data for successful completion of AP courses was not located. • Crit. c: It was vague how and whether student performance data was made available to parents in ways to inform them and improve instruction. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

Strengths:

- Salary schedules are provided for all six consortium LEAs.

Weaknesses (criteria a, b, c and d):

- No school level salary data is provided for each of the participating school buildings per instructional and support staff and all the roles specified in the criterion.

Summary: because actual school level expenditures for teachers and instructional staff are not provided, the overall conclusion is that the score is in the low range.

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

Strengths:

- The evidence is thorough and detailed about the state statutory and legal conditions in place to ensure that the plans to implement the RTTT grant proposal will be successful
- The fact that Tenn. was one of the first states awarded a state Race grant is described in detail to illustrate that this LEA consortium application is well aligned with the state context for implementation.

Weaknesses:

- None

Summary: The applicant provides clear and convincing evidence that the local and state climate and legal parameters provide the conditions and autonomy for the project to be successful.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths (criteria a and b):

- There is considerable, detailed evidence that the applicant LEAs made several efforts to secure input and suggestions about RACE related needs and priorities in affected schools. This included parents, staff and students and community. Results of their survey of nearly 900 stakeholders are included in Appendix A 3 and demonstrate meaningful involvement..
- One of the six LEAs has collective bargaining and there is evidence that the union was involved.
- A wide variety of support letters from parents, businesses, local government, etc. are enclosed.

Weaknesses:

- Criterion A.ii: For the other five LEAs (without collective bargaining), there was no evidence that at least 70 percent of the teachers from the participating schools support the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths (criteria a and b):

- A high quality plan is included and incorporates all the required components and is organized around the five project goals.
- Most of the learning approaches descriptions and plans are positive and should be effective, such as Tenn. value added assessments, technology, middle school interventionists because they include clear and appropriate rationales and convincing evidence-based support.

- There is well documented, detailed information from parents and educators about planned instructional approaches.

Weaknesses:

- Criterion b.2: Throughout the technology discussion, there are several, vague references to students being issued electronic/handheld devices, etc.; these are not clearly defined and described as to how they will enhance learning or what evidence there is that such devices improve student learning. The fact that the region apparently has significant internet black-out regions raises questions about the usefulness of such devices.
- The information about meeting needs of high need students was vague (criterion B v)

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- They identify several quality instructional strategy approaches for grades 5-8, criterion a. These include clear goals, projected work, timeline, deliverables and detailed activities related to creating personalized learning environments and professional learning communities.
- Their plan meets USDE definition of high quality. The plan primarily addresses student instruction in grades 3-8.
- Their Schoolnet Instructional Management Suite, IMS, is the key component to accelerate student progress, administer a standards-based curriculum and plan further instruction. They provide convincing evidence of this. Criterion a iii).

Weaknesses:

- Most of the approaches do not clearly address how they support rigorous graduate HS on time and college and career ready standards (Criterion C 2). For example, few of the strategies are targeted at high school levels.
- Little evidence is provided that their approaches correlate with increased college graduation and/or career ready development.
- Crit. c.i: Little description was provided about how and whether data from their teacher evaluation system will be collected and used for continuous school improvement.

Summary: Overall, the applicant has several strengths and some weaknesses. This places them in the high medium score range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Parts of the Governance structure are described, such as an Advisory Committee, a Council, district Administrator Committee and a Teacher Committee
- All districts have professional learning communities.

Weaknesses:

- The Consortium does not address all of the seven required RTTT governance definition structures; it isn't clear what the decision making method is; all differentiated roles are not clearly defined.
- It appears that no classroom teachers will serve on the Council.
- It does not appear that most of the schools have, or intend to have, school leadership teams (as defined by Race notice), such as classroom teachers.
- It is vague whether school leadership teams have any authority over school calendars, schedules, personnel decisions and/or school budgets.
- There is little evidence that (in all six LEAs) there are opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of standards multiple times nor that resources are fully accessible to students with disabilities and ELL students.
- Most all of the required components of a high quality plan to support project implementation were not located.

Summary: The applicant's score is in the low-medium range because the above weaknesses are significant enough to result in fewer points and there are just two major strengths.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The evaluation of this criterion found a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the finding is that it is in the medium range.

Strengths:

- Criterion 1.a: Access (to tools and resources) by students, parents and staff are presented in a clear and well-organized table.
- The description of and level of support to be provided to partner schools is comprehensive because it includes the project director, intervention specialists, balance assessments, peer support, on line support and targeted coaching.
- It appears that they will use the state interoperable data system
- The state assessment system has a Value Added Assessment component which provides several positive and excellent school reform features.

Weaknesses:

- Each district has a different system for generating local and specific HR information and student achievement information
- It is unclear if students and parents can export their information per criterion c.
- Most of the components of the required high quality plan were undocumented.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- They do address several effective elements of a continuous improvement plan; these are: assess, plan and design, implement and evaluate.
- They provide a clear chart with an overview of activities, targets and specific strategies to be carried out by various LEA staff

Weaknesses:

- No description was located about or whether the results of this plan will be publicly shared.
- They do not specifically describe whether or how their plan will make decisions about the quality of their proposal investments.
- A high quality plan for continuous improvement process is incomplete because it does not address their five major goals, does not have a timeline, rationale and there are no deliverables.

Because there are several weaknesses and two strengths, the overall score is in the medium range.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- They state that their project director will be responsible for consistent communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders and proceed to give brief overview of sample interactions with stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

- A high quality plan (with all key components) for on-going communication was not located.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- They address many specific performance measures. Appendix p. 229

Weaknesses:

- Their sub groups (performance measures, p 229+) include only “economically disadvantaged” and students “with disabilities”; this is incomplete
- Measures are achievable, but not ambitious. Growth is only about 1 % annually. To be ambitious, growth should be greater than one percent.
- One of the measures (Decrease student referrals) has no baseline and no projected quantifiable amounts.
- Several measures simply state “close gaps” with no projections about how much annually.

Summary: The high number of weaknesses results in a low overall score.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Some of the evaluation components are promising, such as the Advisory Council monitoring data measures, sharing data with all consortium leaders, and overseeing benchmark data and several other key implementation strategies.

Weaknesses:

- There is no high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development and technology activities

Summary: the absence of a high quality plan is a major weakness and results in a low-medium score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
Strengths:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All project costs are described and detailed in accordance with RTTT requirements. • The budget narrative is clear and thorough. 		
Weaknesses:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly \$11 million is budgeted for mobile devices (either laptops or tablets) with little or no evidence that such expenditures have evidence-based record of improving student achievement and/or closing the achievement gap in high need schools. Cost is not reasonable. 		
Summary: The applicant provides a detailed description of project funds, including the rationale and sources. Because of the large amount proposed for mobile devices without sufficient rationale, the overall score is in the medium range.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
Strengths:		

- None

Weaknesses:

- Sustainability plan was not located in the proposal.
- Detailed information about project implementation and management, responsible parties, activities, objectives, timelines and deliverables are presented. None of these address how the project can be sustained after grant funding ends.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- The description of the partnership is coherent and sustainable
- The applicant's plan to collaborate with County-led initiative EPIC (Encourage, Protect, Invest, and Connect) to form teams in each LEA is a convincing and sustainable partnership, criteria 1.
- Seven student and related desired results and indicators are identified. Crit. 2 and 3.
- The description of the quality of EPIC is thorough and includes thorough information in Appendix XI. Crit. 3 and 4.
- The local chamber of commerce will also be significantly involved; this further demonstrates the diverse partners leading this priority. Crit. 5.
- The proposed events and objectives and outcomes are appropriate and reasonable. Crit. 3 and 4.

Weaknesses:

- Crit. 6. The desired results are identified, but not desegregated annually for the grant life of the project.

Summary: The overall conclusion is that the competitive project is particularly strong as detailed by the many strengths and only one weakness identified. Thus, this merits a high overall score.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides extensive evidence that it meets the absolute priority. Some of the criteria are highly met with significant strengths, such as: state context for implementation, Learning, teaching and learning and professional development, and LEA and school infrastructure. Most of the other criteria are met at a "medium level.

They coherently and comprehensively address how they will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice); accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	115
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0070TN-3 for Bristol City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant sets forth aspects of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, but does not fully meet the requirements of this selection criteria as outlined below.</p> <p>The applicant in support of its work in core educational areas, states success in implementing higher and clearer standards, expanding its data system, redefining teacher evaluation directly tied to student achievement results and creating an empowerment district for TN's highest priority and lowest achieving schools.</p> <p>The applicant, however, does not describe the work accomplished within the existing ongoing TN Race to the Top monies for students and teachers and how the determination was made for additional new RTTT goals to expand supports to middle grade students and teachers for this current project. The rationale to serve middle school students as part of the applicant's coherent reform vision is not supported within the narrative as a next step.</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of what has been done to implement higher standards, expand data systems, and redefine teacher evaluation systems, but does not describe specific outcomes and growth in these stated areas that build on their efforts. The applicant does not describe, nor respond to the criteria on how the past initiative helped turn around lowest achieving schools, recruit, and retain effective principals and teachers where they are needed and build data systems.</p> <p>The applicant supports its effort to accelerate student achievement through personalized student learning and student support based on their interests by using technology and diagnostic data through an intra-district balanced assessment process with a common technology application to produce common assessments supported by intervention specialists. The applicant proposes to use a private company to provide professional development and intervention strategies for literacy and math. The applicant, in support of student achievement, will devote resources to reach parents through the use and sharing of student data.</p> <p>The district, in support of personalized learning in the classroom, proposes that students use multiple learning modalities for individualized remediation and acceleration as well as blended models and online courses based on students' individual rates of learning with benchmark assessments to assess progress. The applicant will provide literacy instruction to close the gaps they say exist in middle schools and provide for personalized learning plans for students as well as technology devices for each student and acceleration opportunities for 8th graders to take high school courses.</p> <p>The applicant's score is based on a lack of information that describes the outcomes of the existing RTTT initiatives and the why, the rationale for seeking new funding to serve middle school grades at this time.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The lead agency indicates that the First Tennessee Region of school districts, in the past, collaborated on i3 Innovation Grant Monies and RTTT initiatives and this new effort will support the group's efforts to meet the challenges in the No Child Left Behind and the requirements of the Tennessee Department of Education. The Advisory Committee members are</p>		

listed from the three school districts by name, not titles. The final consortium district numbers for the project are six.

The applicant in support of this criteria lists all the participating schools by district with a total of 46 schools serving grades 5-8 which include elementary and middle schools designated. The total number of students is also defined including a 62.4% of low income students and 62.4% of high need students. Separate charts are provided that breakdown each school's eligibility reinforcing participants from low income and high-need students.

The applicant does not, however, provide sufficient details on the selection and criteria processes used to identify individual schools as well as how it was determined to support middle school administrators, teachers and students for this project. Included in the applicant's school list is a high school from a participating district which is not a school that typically serves middle school grades.

The description at this time to support high quality LEA level and school level implementation of the proposal in relationship to the selection of school districts and schools to participate in the project needs to be more fully supported. The applicant's description of the school and district selection process was not fully developed.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes elements of a quality plan for how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support districts. The applicant intends to provide in support of the plan, high quality professional development and teacher supports where students are working on a common set of core state standards through a variety of learning activities supported by a personalized learning plan. Classrooms, according to the applicant, will be transformed into true personalized learning environments infused with technology and real time student data. The use of Tennessee Online Public School is an online high school course system that will also apply to grade 8 students seeking acceleration as well as the purchase of a single portal design, single platform delivery and single user interface for all applications. In this plan, the project will utilize, as stated, Evans Newton Professional Development expertise for teachers for continuous improvement efforts throughout the consortium of districts. In support of a quality plan, the applicant will work intensely to reshape teaching practices through a formative balanced assessment process as well as having teachers and school leaders acquire the skills necessary to honor and support each student as an individual learner and that each student has his or her own learning style.

Participating project schools are comprised of both middle schools and elementary schools serving grades five through eight. The applicant does not distinguish how the approach to implementation may differ in these two type of school configurations and how this may impact project results. The district does not fully provide for timelines and the specific parties responsible for implementing the activities associate with scaling up and translating the project into meaningful reform to support district wide change. The applicant does not specifically describe how the proposal will be scaled up to support district wide change beyond the grade levels within the proposal.

The applicant's score is a reflection of not describing distinctive elements inherent in both elementary and middle schools that would account for reform efforts to bring about change as well as how the proposal will be scaled up beyond the target population and schools.

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

10

5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides elements that are achievable and equal to state target results, but do not appear ambitious in all component districts. The assessment data for example, lists for Unicoi County grade 5 ELA, that the overall scores will move in SY2015-16 from 59.7% to 60.7% in 2016-17 and only to 61.7% in 2017-18. There is a variation of growth rates by school district which are achievable but not ambitious.

The project provides goals for improved student outcomes as equal to the state defined parameters by school county and Bristol City for grades 5-8 in the subject areas tested for all categories of students. The project aims to provide districts with supports to use a uniform data management system and a balanced assessment process with appropriate software to assist educators, students and parents to make deeper connections with data. This will help educators take ACT EXPLORE data for every student and longitudinally monitor them from grade eight through grade 12 to determine academic risk or advancement and provide the personalized program. EXPLORE will be used to assist in creating post secondary plans and career preferences for participants. The applicant in consideration of the affective domain will use ACT ENGAGE in such areas as control anger, obey school rules and cooperates with others

In addition ENGAGE, EXPLORE, and TAS reports will assess and support students at risk in academic readiness and

behaviors, monitor ENGAGE behaviors such as absenteeism, missed homework, disciplinary actions to monitor progress toward college and career readiness. The project lists for grades 5-8 all the data sources to measure student progress which includes math growth goals based on TVAAS Predictions, English Language Growth goals based on TVAAS and Engage Data as well as others.

The annual growth as listed by Tennessee appear achievable, but do not appear ambitious. Baseline data illustrates that Black/Hispanic/Native Americans would increase RLA scores for 2013-14 to 2014-15 to move from 55.9% to 58.9%. There is no discussion on how goals and outcomes may be modified based on student success during the four year period of the project. Numbers are similar for economically disadvantaged and English Language Learners. With the supports proposed by the project for students, staff and parents, increases to be considered ambitious should go beyond the modest growth rate indicated by the state. In addition some project school scores are at or above the state reference point and their growth rate should reflect more ambitious outcomes. The applicant does not provide graduation and college enrollment as defined in this criteria.

The score is reflective of the assessment data that goals are to be ambitious and achievable according to the criteria as well as the applicant not providing graduation and college enrollment data.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some data to illustrate a record of success in the past four years for areas related to high schools. This includes meeting goals for students to take online courses, purchasing technology equipment to offer distance and online learning.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide information on improved student learning outcomes, high school graduation rates and college enrollment. Areas of distance learning, dual enrollment and advanced placement, according to information listed, have not met expected goals on their existing RTTT project funding.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide results on how in the past four years they have achieved ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest achieving schools or lowest performing schools.</p> <p>This section requests that the applicant describe <u>prior</u> record of success in the area to make student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services. The applicant discusses vehicles for this to occur in the current proposed plan, but not what has actually taken place in the last four years as requested for this section.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient information of a record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides for (a) actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school level instructional and support staff; (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only and; (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only. This information is found in the appendix of their application.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated a level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments by including the required personnel salaries stipulated for this application. The applicant does not describe how the general public from the school communities participating in the grant, are afforded access to this information.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant provides specific citations that substantiate sufficient autonomy under state legal statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. This is verified pursuant to TCA Section 49-2-203, a local board of education has the authority to manage and control all public schools that may be established or that may be established under its jurisdiction. They also cite the fact that Bristol City and Hamblen County Schools were awarded Focus School Grants by the TN Department of Education because of their commitment to improve instruction for the lowest performing students within their districts. Districts have committed in written MOU's to implement the project, and have to the extent possible, based on personnel policies and contracts, provided written agreement of the administrators and teachers to carry out the project's goals.

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State regulatory authority to implement personalized learning.

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

15

14

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant in support of stakeholder engagement provides a copy of a survey to reflect the degree of readiness for a transition to a personalized learning environment and indicated that the results were positive regarding moving to that style of learning and that results were in favor of also asking for technology to guide the process. There is strong evidence and detail to support consortium member engagement in the process as evidenced by the extensive and detailed MOU's that spell out an understanding of the commitment made by each of the school district's in the project. Teacher organizations, where applicable, provided sign-off signatures in support of the proposed project as well as the provision that at least 70% of teachers without collective bargaining agreements support the proposal. The applicant, also provided for each district in the preparation of the proposal, to assign a liaison to work with the advisory committee.

There is wide spread support in the form of letters for the project from the mayors of the city and counties affected by the proposal as well as several letters from individual parents and heads of parent organizations in the respective schools within the target region. There is also a commitment from the head of the school leadership department from an institution of higher learning to work with school leaders to provide professional development throughout the project.

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder support except in the area of public forums for the larger community and families within the project geographic area.

While there is adequate support in the form of letters from PTA presidents within the targeted community, there is no mention of specific public forum opportunities afforded to the community as a whole as well as parents to participate in the development of the project.

Except for this issue of the applicant holding and describing scheduled public forums to the community to provide feedback in the preparation for the project, there is evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant identified components of a high quality plan listed below for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the supports to graduate college and be career ready under this section, this reviewer cited elements of the plan that were not fully detailed to support desired project outcomes.

The applicant in helping the student understand what they are learning, utilizes a balanced assessment with benchmark and summative assessments to assist students in understanding what they are learning as proposed in this proposal. These benchmark assessments, according to the applicant, translate to data conversion that assist students in creating achievable goals. The district proposes to use Schoolnet to provide personalized learning paths for students and data access for educators and parents.

The applicant proposes in their plan to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards. The applicant plans to accomplish this by creating collaborative partnerships with business and allow students to research multiple career paths through online supports and career surveys that fosters a three year journey of career awareness. As part of this effort, the applicant proposes to use the Explore Assessment, Plan Assessment and interest survey for future planning; including college awareness.

The applicant does not, however, provide a discussion of the climate of opportunity in the catchment area to successfully carry out listed activities that provide middle school students with the career outreach being planned as part of the project.

There is no specific discussion that details how students in grades 5-8 will have the actual opportunity on a personalized basis to become involved in deep learning in areas of their academic interest.

There is narrative that describes how students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives that motivate individual student learning. This includes virtual field trips and conversations online with persons from other countries and cultures.

There is no specific discussion in the narrative as to how project students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal setting, communication, teamwork and creativity as listed in the criteria.

The applicant does provide for instruction in the core subjects of reading and mathematics with supports that are online which are predicated on improved teacher development programs, the use of intervention specialists and technology as well as utilizing school librarians. Technology, according to the applicant, and its uses are the driving force to improve reading and mathematics. However, there is an absence of a specific discussion related to college and career ready standards or college and career ready graduation requirements for middle school students; including specific course work and monitoring of students in this section, as well as specific supports students will have available to them to stay on track. The specific details to accommodate strategies for high need students and to provide supports to this group are not provided.

There is specificity for training and supports to educators and students to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them to track and manage learning for handheld devices. Parents, according to the applicant, will be responsible for Ipad or laptop applications and usage at home in terms of access to retrieve data, but there is no specific technology training earmarked for that group of parents.

The applicant did not fully respond to the components of a high quality plan for this criteria.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant has elements of a high quality plan for improving teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment to graduate college and career ready, elements of such a plan that include more definitive timelines and specific parties responsible for implementing the activities are not provided.

In support of effective implementation of personalized learning environments that meets students' needs, the applicant will be contracting with a private professional development company which incorporates the TargetTeach process, an adaptive, evidenced based model for rapid and sustainable school improvement. This teacher based initiative has five major components that identify instructional goals, align curriculum to standards, fill the gaps with quality targeted curriculum materials and monitor student progress and make adjustments in a student programs. In addition, the added support of the Schoolnet (IMS) Instructional Management Suite provides for districts to improve student achievement by being able to make informed instructional decisions and help educators by providing formative assessments to help identify needs and track students on a daily basis. The analysis through Schoolnet will assimilate current initiatives around assessment into a single user friendly platform.

The applicant does not provide specific details on how to adapt content and instruction to allow students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their individual needs and interests in optimal learning approaches which may include collaborative work, project based learning or the use of videos, audio and manipulatives.

The applicant does not describe how they will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems.

The applicant indicates, in support of effective learning environments and meeting student academic needs, the expected partnership with East Tennessee State University for teacher leadership training initiatives. In addition, the chairperson of the Teacher Leadership Program agrees to serve on the Advisory Committee and oversee an onsite administrative endorsement and teacher leader intern program to develop ongoing teacher leader training sessions to improve teaching. It is also planned that ETSU Teacher Leadership team will build capacity in administrators and teachers by assisting them with collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of student data among the faculty and district through creation of formative assessments. The applicant also indicates that this team will work with School and district level PLC teams to provide ongoing support and research for leadership strategies as administrators and teachers move through this change in school and classroom instruction.

The applicant does not specifically provide information from the district's teacher evaluation system that helps school leaders and school leadership teams to take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

The applicant does not specifically provide a response with a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals; including hard to staff schools, subjects and specialty areas to meet this criteria.

The applicant's score for this criteria is based on elements missing in what is considered a high quality plan under the definition of RTTT.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	4

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not make the case for a high quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive polices and infrastructure that provides every student and educator with the support and resources they need. The plan does not include a rationale for the activities, a specific timeline and the parties responsible for implementing the actual activities.

The applicant provides a diagram with a listing of how the consortium will be managed. Listed in support are: Project Advisory Committees: Power of One Council; followed by the District Administrative Committee, Teacher Committee, Parent; the EPIC Committee; Project Director; Intervention Specialists support; ENI Coaching; ETSU; Technology Advisory; and District Technology Directors. The applicant also provides a listing for members of the Power of One Advisory Committee and the Power of One Council.

The applicant does not provide a description of how governance structure diagram presented provides actual direct supports and services to participating project schools for implementation within the consortium school buildings.

The applicant states that there is a range in the powers granted to school leadership teams in the consortium as they relate to school schedules, calendars, school personnel, etc. The reviewer cannot determine based on the applicant's narrative statements, to what extent that school leadership teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over the factors listed within this criteria.

The applicant does not provide sufficient detail to determine whether students within the consortium are given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and not the amount of time spent on a topic within middle school grades in both elementary and middle schools. While one consortium member city utilizes differentiated instruction practices, that has not been transferred to the other participating schools at this time.

The applicant does not provide details on how students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times as well as provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.

The applicant has not provided the components of a high quality plan as defined to support project implementation under this criteria for personalized learning.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides elements of a high quality plan that the LEA's and the schools' infrastructure support personalized learning. The components related to the timeline, rationale for the activities and specific parties responsible for implementing the activities, however, are not described for this criteria.

The applicant provides information that parents, educators and stakeholders regardless of income have access to necessary content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school. This includes work on the visible learning culture, personalized learning through handheld devices and learning applications, using ACT Explore and Engage Data as well as career surveys. The faculty, according to the applicant, will have better information for students to design instruction based on student need. Parents will have better access to student data and a voice in grant projects by participation on advisory committees.

The applicant provides for levels of technical support in the form of specific staff such as Intervention Specialists and the development of teacher leaders within middle grades. The use of Schoolnet is a feature that permits parents, students and teachers access to student data at any time.

The applicant provides adequate examples of interoperable data systems as part of the state mandated testing program such as the TN Comprehensive Assessment Program as well as state wide interoperable budget information.

The applicant does not describe how state mandated data/testing systems' outcomes will be integrated into the data monitoring systems the project will be using to track student achievement data.

The score is based on the applicant's status at this time that does not describe the current state in the district as it reflects state data being integrated into the districts' systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative states that they are committed to mentoring, measuring and publicly sharing information on the quality of investments being funded and that they will organize the project director and leadership to ensure timely and regular feedback on progress and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. The applicant describes activities, target and strategies in chart form in order to accomplish desired outcomes.

The applicant, however, does not describe the plan components, the where, when and how, for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals in the 46 schools participating. The actual details of how the plan will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of its investments in technology, professional development, school leadership, etc. are not provided.

The plan cannot be considered high quality without this information. The applicant includes the activities, but not the rationale for the activities, the timeline and the actual parties responsible for implementing the activities.

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

The applicant's plan for ongoing communication and engagement indicates that the project director will ensure consistent communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholder and facilitate work with the leadership teams and keep the district informed monthly by posting talking points, timelines and next steps for districts in an online format

available to all stakeholders. This includes a midterm report and an annual report.

The plan is not detail specific enough and does not reflect a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with the varied stakeholders in 46 schools across several districts. Key goals, activities to be taken, the rationale for the activities, the timeline and parties responsible for implementing the activities are not described.

The score reflects the criteria's components that are not addressed in full.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal provides the required performance measures for the number of percentage of participating students by subgroup by county or city school district in the consortium who are on track to college and career readiness for grades 8 and 9 as found in Appendix A-11, but do not provide performance measures for middle school grades 5,6, and 7 for students being served.

The applicant did not indicate at least one grade appropriate academic leading indicator of successful implementation of the plan as well as proposing at least one grade appropriate health or social emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of it plan. While the applicant lists in the measurement goal to Decrease student discipline referrals, there is no indicator of successful implementation.

The applicant has not described ambitious yet achievable proposed performance measures for this project student population within this criteria.

The applicant does not describe how they will review and improve the measure over time to determine success of the project to gage implementation progress.

The score for this section is reflective of the applicant's not responding to the specific criteria.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In order to meet the obligation of their plan, the Advisory Council will comprise of representatives from the lead districts in the First TN region that includes Bristol City, Johnson County and Washington County. They will meet quarterly throughout the duration of the grant and at that time monitor consortium data measures, including benchmark data, student achievement data, teacher value added data and teacher evaluation data. The intent, according to the applicant, is to compile data measures for the consortium districts to provide timely feedback for all stakeholders. Annually, the applicant indicates, consortium leaders will be invited to collaborate through a consortium leadership professional learning community. The applicant indicates that the Project Director will continually provide communication to stakeholders through newsletters, web based communication and other electronic media as a list of activities, but does not provide content and timing.

The description above as provided by the applicant for the project does not inform how flexibility in modifying areas of need that may come about in 46 schools in multiple districts during the course of a full year that may involve areas of professional development, technology and shifting of project resources may be modified. Authority for quicker decision making, more frequently than quarterly meetings, regarding adjustments and revisions within the project is not specified.

The applicant has not substantiated with sufficient detail the elements of a high quality plan that rigorously evaluates the effectiveness of the funded activities.

The applicant's score is reflective of the need for specificity on how modifications and changes for the project will occur in a more immediate time frame.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project on the Budget Subpart 1: Overall Budget Summary. Funding for all project activities are provided by RTTT for this proposal.

The resources appear reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The number of and titles of staff to be hired for the project appear to represent areas of expertise to help meet program outcomes. Included are 20 interventionists in the areas of literacy, mathematics and technology integration as well as 8 technology technicians to provide support to the LEA's. This includes costs associated with personnel, travel and other areas specified in the budget. Technology upgrades and infrastructure within the LEA's to allow for internet access and the provision of hand held devices for each student and teacher are listed as a key components in the project narrative and are supported by the budget. The applicant lists the professional personnel and their titles and functions within the budget narrative in support of their implementation of the project.

The applicant does not specifically state in the budget narrative those resources that will be used for one time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during the length of the multi-year grant and beyond the award period. This omission reflect the score provided for this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes activities associated with project sustainability. These include the services on the Advisory Committee of the head of the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department of ETSU with graduate interns working in assigned project schools and district directors work with local government to adjust budgets for designated monies for technology support.

The applicant has not provided information and details that support a high quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan lacks key goals, activities to be taken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. The few activities listed by the applicant falls short in describing support from state and local government leaders and how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. The score for this criteria is reflective of a lack of specificity for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes school based initiatives to support this competitive preference priority. These include EPIC in the schools, school level supports and video conferencing for career development. The applicant will have an affiliation with a university. These do not represent coherent and sustainable partnerships to support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1. Organizations that would represent viable partnerships include those listed in the criteria. These may include public health, before-school, after-school, and social service providers, integrated student service providers, businesses, philanthropies, civic groups, community based organizations and early learning programs to name a few. The applicant has not developed sufficient data that additional student and family support organizations that address the social emotional or behavioral need of the participating students are aligned with this initiative. The applicant has not provided details about the specific social, emotional needs that emanate from the 46 schools participating in the project.

The district identifies desired results for eight categories and they include: Teachers and students will demonstrate descriptors of EPIC; Students will be prepared to discuss focused areas of interest for transition to high school; and Students are college and career ready. The applicant does not provide discussion on tracking the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA, use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The applicant has not provided discussion on how they would scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high needs students and communities in the LEA or consortium over time as well as improve results.

The applicant positively uses the EPIC program concept to improve school based outcomes for students. The applicant does not describe how the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs such as acculturation for immigrants and refugees, for example, if that is the need.

The applicant does not make a strong case for this competitive priority, nor does it engage parents and families in their description of participating students in both decision making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family and school needs.

The applicant has not stretched its outreach to organizations and community agencies whose purposes are to provide community based services that promote the goals of RTTT in the community and work with families and children to improve conditions. The score reflects the limits of the services to be provided.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant throughout the narrative makes reference to create personalized learning environments to the schools participating in the project. They will do this by using technology and as they state and an unprecedented intra-district balanced assessment process with a common technology application. They intend to provide supports with Intervention Specialists at the middle grade level to facilitate transitions to research based professional development and technology driven instructional supports. The applicant proposes to focus on outcomes by utilizing personal handheld devices and applications. The use of a virtual curriculum and visible learning is their thrust. The applicant intends to reach out to parents to share student data via technology that will be available to student and family. Blended models and online courses will encourage learners to progress at individual rates and benchmark assessments will show student progress. The applicant will purchase software and professional development to assist in this transition. The district has met Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	124
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0070TN-2 for Bristol City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant has set for a comprehensive and coherent reform vision

- Narrative lacks specific details that support how this vision builds on work in the four educational assurance areas (as defined in this notice) .The applicant's narrative goes into great detail to discuss the necessity for this vision of reform and the goals of the vision, however, there are no details on existing work or accomplishments of the consortium to support the work in the four core educational assurance areas.
- The narrative is heavily supported by research that supports the need for positive and relevant change in how students are prepared for college and careers., however, It lacks details and data to support how this robust and ambitious approach to accelerate student achievement differs from supports currently being provided to students.
- The components for a personalized learning environments are elaborated on in great detail, however, it lacks a description of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. For example, the narrative lists that it will support the development of the whole child through targeted support for entrepreneurship and career/technical pathways, however, the applicant did not include further details or description to elaborate on how or what this this classroom experience will look like for students and teachers, and how it differs from what is presently taking place.

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent vision of reform has not been satisfied because the applicant failed to provide information about the foundation that it is building from in the four core reform areas, did not provide sufficient rationale for the approach to personalized learning for their description of the classroom experience for their particular population of students, and lacked depth in their programming and activities. Although the applicant provides basic information meeting the criteria, the proposal lacks additional detail and explanation necessary to interpret the comprehensive reform vision, resulting in a low score.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level implementation of this proposal is reasonable:

- The applicant has deemed the targeted students for this proposal as middle school grades - 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, however has not provided a rationale for this targeted group
- Total of 10, 021 students have been identified as middle school students
- 62.4% of students have been identified as low-income
- 62.4% of students have been identified as high needs
- All teachers and administrators from 46 elementary, middle and one high school from the 6 LEAs will participate in this project
- Proposal identifies on high school in this proposal (Johnson County High School) but does not provide any supporting details for including this high school
- This concerted collaboration ensures all elementary and middle schools, targeted students and teachers are participating in the proposed activities for this proposal.
- Narrative does not discuss the rationale for not including the one high school mentioned in this plan for middle school students

The application would have been strengthened by providing additional details to support the rationale for the inclusion of Johnson City High School as a participating school in this project, given that this school was the only high school identified in this proposal for middle school students.

Overall, the applicant has provided evidence to demonstrate a plan that, while providing sufficient information about the schools and students selected, does not provide details regarding the selection process or rationale for selection to support a high-quality LEA level and school-level implementation proposal.

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

The applicant provided a research-based narrative as evidence to support its plan for LEA-wide reform and change. The targeted group of students have been deemed a high priority for the consortium, however, it would have strengthened the narrative if the applicant had provided additional documentation and data to support:

- how this reform will be scaled up beyond the participating schools

- how this plan for change will impact students who have not been identified as either low income or high needs
- theory of change of how its plan will improve student learning outcomes
- specific details to support the intended outcomes in math and English to improve student achievement

The applicant provides some evidence to support LEA-wide reform and change, but overall, the applicant has not provided a high-quality plan for LEA-wide reform and change, resulting in a medium score for this section.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes focuses on was confusing as the section bore the same label as a previous section (Applicant's Approach to Implementation rather than the title listed above). The proposal is poorly organized and applicant has not fully responded to the criteria to (c) and (d), as a result, It was not clear to the reviewer if this narrative was intended for this criteria or for (A)(2).

The baseline and annual goals for math and ELA have been submitted for each school, however, the applicant did not submit details to support why the annual growth targets for each subgroup have been set so low (1%) for the following subgroups: students with disabilities, blacks, Hispanic, Native American and economically disadvantaged. The plan lacks rationale for these figures, particularly when the data indicates that the goals are lower then the actual baseline. For example, Unicoi County 6th grade math TCAP % Proficient and Advanced baselines of 47.6 SY 2011 - 2012 and 34.7% SY 2012-2013, the applicant did not elaborate for this substantial drop for this subgroup and how they arrived at the current goals.

Overall, the extent to which the applicant vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity has not been satisfied because the applicant goals are achievable but lacks the criteria to demonstrate an ambitious plan for reform for each LEA.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant's narrative is demonstrating a clear track record of success provided the following evidence to support this criteria:

- Advanced Placement enrollment targets were met for in 2011/2012 but were not met for 2012/2013. It would have strengthened the application if the applicant had provided details to support this criteria
- Dual Enrollment enrollment targets were met for 2011/2012 but were not met for 2012/2013. It would have strengthened the application if the applicant had provided details to support this criteria.
- Distance Learning enrollment targets were not met for either 2012/2013 and 2012/2013. It would have strengthened the application if the applicant had provided details to support this criteria.
- Online enrollment targets were met for 2011/2012 and 2012/2013. It would have strengthened the application if the applicant provided details to support this success

The applicant uses these goals to demonstrate its commitment to improve student learning and close achievement gaps, increase high school graduation rates and increase college enrollment.

- the number of students who successfully completed Advanced Placement course
- the number of students who successfully completed Dual Enrollment courses
- the number of students who successfully completed Distance Learning courses
- the number of students who successfully completed online enrollment courses
- a narrative to that identified how the courses will result in achievement the lowest achieving schools
- a listing of the schools identified as the lowest-achieving or lowest performing in these courses in order to demonstrate the applicant's reform ability
- details to support a plan to make student performance data available to students, parents, and educators in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and completion

Overall, the applicant's clear track record of success for the past four years has been insufficient because the applicant has failed to provide information to support that it is building on these reforms in these categories to demonstrate their track record for reform and how these reforms have improved student learning, closed achievement gaps, high school graduation and college enrollment rates for the past four years.

The applicant provides limited information regarding their track record in the past four years in the area of student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment but does not include documentation to demonstrate success with turning around low performing schools, and how the data was provided to students and parents that improved and performed services. Overall, the applicant's clear track record of success for the past four years has been insufficient, resulting in a low score.

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

The evidence of increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments by making information public is demonstrated because the applicant did provide salary schedules for teachers, supporting teachers, educational assistants, LPNs, principals, and per pupil expenditures for each LEA in the consortium.

The applicant provides some evidence to demonstrate transparency in LEA processes, practices and investment, however, there is no description to support how this information is made available by making public, by school . Overall, the extent to which the LEA has demonstrated a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investment has been insufficient, resulting in a low score.

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

The applicant has a prior record of reform under the State's Race to the Top initiatives and as a result of the funds, supports and programs exist at a couple of the schools. This level of support has resulted in the need to scale this reform beyond the two schools.

- Local school districts have authority over their personnel, procedures and policies.
- The local governance extends sufficient autonomy in order to manage and maintain public schools in their jurisdiction
- The Focus Schools Grant program were given more autonomy and additional funding in decision-making as it relates to closing the achievement gap, two schools in this consortium received award, Hamblen County and Bristol City)
- Selected Focus schools received waivers from No Child Left Behind
- Build on transformative practices and reforms from State's Race to the Top award - young student's academic readiness, high school graduate's readiness for college and careers, and higher rates of graduates enrolling and succeeding in post-secondary education
- Initiatives focus on student achievement through personalized learning environments

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated successful conditions and sufficient autonomy in order to implement personalized learning environments.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative for this criteria details at length how teachers and administrators of this consortium participated in the development of this proposal, as well as their level of engagement. It is obvious the process yielded overwhelming support for this proposal. However, the applicant did not provide documentation from students and families in participating schools to demonstrate their level of engagement during the development of this proposal and how their feedback was used to revise this proposal.

Additionally, the narrative is lacking letters of support from critical stakeholder groups, including student organizations, early learning programs, business community, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning.

Key stakeholders are integral for to any massive and innovative change, as outlined in this proposal. This plan in this proposal is ambitious and its many many components requires collaborations and cooperation between all key stakeholders in order to be successful within the existing educational culture. It is important that the plan for change is communicated, discussed, and acknowledged by all key stakeholders.

Overall, in spite of the thorough detail provided regarding the involvement of teachers and administrators, the applicant has not provided adequate evidence to demonstrate meaningful engagement with all key stakeholders who will be impacted by this proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants plan for improving teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment is supported in the narrative evidence-based strategies advocated by researchers, however, the applicant does not discuss how the strategies currently being implemented differ from the suggested approaches. The information submitted is being used to validate the necessity for its approach toward providing students with the supports to graduate college- and career -ready. The applicant did not provide information to discuss current best practices which can be scaled up to support this transformative reform.

- Inclusive plan addresses multiple levels of needs for all learners
- focus on exposing ensuring targeted grades have multiple opportunities to learn and understand career paths
- integrating hand-held technology in all subject areas
- providing students with 1:2 access to technology
- implementing research based instructional practices to drive teaching and learning practices for students (e.g. Orton-Gillingham, personal learning environments
- appropriate data/learning management system in order to ensure broader access to student and their families to track and manage progress(Schoolnet/IMS)
- create ongoing collaborative partnerships with businesses to promote career paths and early college opportunities

The applicant did not provide detailed information in the following areas, making it hard for the reviewer to assess the quality of the proposed activities:

- Identify current supports being provided to students within the consortium schools and support the reason for the change
- how the technology being implemented will increase student achievement and decrease the achievement gap
- how students without at-home technology access or neighborhood/area access issues will be supported around accessing instructional activities outside of school (the narrative states that technology will be the primary support for instructional activities)
- mechanisms that have been identified to ensure students and families understand how to track and manage their learning

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning has not been met all the criteria for a high-quality plan because the applicant failed to provide details to that address all the timelines, deliverables and parties responsible. Although the applicant provides the key goals, activities and rationale for meeting the criteria, the proposal lacks additional detail and explanation necessary to determine if the plan is of high-quality, resulting in a medium score.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants plan for improving learning and teaching and leading by personalizing the learning environment is supported by evidence-based best practices supported by various researchers.

The applicant's approach provides details that address the training resources and supports in order to help educators improve instruction. The plan clearly demonstrates how students, in particular high-needs students, will receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The consortiums' commitment and willingness to insure that all students have highly qualified and effective teachers to provide the demands of the criteria in this proposal. some

examples are:

- Train all teachers to evaluate their own performance using monitoring and feedback data
- Continued technical and professional support throughout the implementation process
- Providing targeted and ongoing professional development to all teachers to maintain relevancy
- Establish professional learning communities to ensure continuity with equity and access to information as well as inform teaching practices
- Recognizing the benefits of forming partnership with high education institutions that will assist in the quality and delivery of instruction as well as provide needed feedback to ensure sustainability of proposal
- Goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties for implementing the proposal's training and resources for implementation of the personalized learning environments

Overall, the applicant has presented a high quality plan for improving the teaching and leading in order to provide students with a personalized learning environment in order to provide all students with the highly effective teachers and principals to graduate college- and career-ready.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The extent to which the applicant has a high quality plan to support this project implementation is acceptable, based on the documentation to support this criteria, with the exception of criteria (D)(1)(e)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LEAs have loosely coupled autonomy over the schools under their leadership and agree to abide by the consortiums Advisory Committee rules, policies and practices that facilitate personalized learning environments. • Each LEA will maintain autonomy as it pertains to the needs of their schools/educators/students and will be held responsible for carrying out the goals of this proposal • All LEAs will coordinate their learning resources to insure all students within this LEA has equal access to the best instructional resources based on their learning needs • lacks details of a high-quality plan to demonstrate how the process for students to demonstrate mastery will be implemented for the targeted grades, due to the range of grades with most of the LEA schools (i.e. elementary) • lacks details to support the learning resources and instructional practices that might be used for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners <p>Overall, the applicant has not presented a plan of high-quality to support project implementation</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative to discuss the LEA and school infrastructure goes to great lengths to highlight all the personnel and supports that will be available to students, parents and faculty/staff.

- Each LEA will have a state of the art facility in order for participants to feel safe and secure and personnel to provide technical support to students and parents, however, the applicant did not provide sufficient details for how the plan will use technology systems that allow students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders to have appropriate levels of technical supports and examples for this range of strategies that will be used to provide the support.
- Applicant has selected Schoolnet to provide online support to allow parents, students, and teachers to access, use and diagnose student need. This web-based support is available 24/7 from anywhere.
- All resources will be developed, aligned and allocated to meet the needs of students
- School districts use one of two student information systems which are web-based and secure and both systems can be easily integrated with Schoolnet.
- Each LEA will use an interoperable data system that will include human resources data, student information data, and instructional improvement system data, however proposal lacks additional detail and explanation to ensure the process that LEAs and schools will use for this criteria.

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has met some of the criteria of high-quality plan for LEA and school infrastructure

The applicant provides information on for the key goals, activities and rationale of this plan, however, the plan lacks the timeline, deliverables and parties responsible in order to demonstrate a high-quality plan for LEA and school infrastructure, resulting in a medium score.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's continuous improvement process strategy is create an continuous cycle of Assess/Reassess, Plan and Design, Implement, and Evaluate to insure sustain, measure, motivate and communicate to stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and qualitative data will be use to drive this cycle of continuous improvement Project director will employ a scorecard to oversee the process of timely and regular feedback on progress Data will be shared with leadership prior to revisiting next steps Table included to demonstrate the process Activities, targets and strategies, however the plan for this process lacks a timeline, deliverables and parties responsible <p>The applicant's plan for continuous improvement process demonstrates some elements of a high-quality plan, however, it lacks the information that describes how this process will be used to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant,</p> <p>Overall, the proposal lacks additional details and explanation necessary for a high-quality plan, resulting in a medium score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's does not present a plan of high quality for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The narrative ensures that communication with internal and external stakeholders will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing ongoing communication with consistence Posting talking points, timelines and next steps online Supporting ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders with midterm and annual reports summarizing data to drive next steps The applicant did not provide specific details on how it would make information accessible to stakeholders who do not have access to technology, therefore limiting their ability to access the information being shared. <p>The applicant plan provides the activities that will be used for ongoing communication and engagement, however, it does not describe he key goals, rationale, timeline, deliverables and parties responsible to demonstrate a high-quality plan. Overall, the applicant's ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is insufficient, resulting in a low score.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant has met the criteria for this selection for continuous improvement.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not represent a high -quality plan for performance measures as the information submitted does not address all the criteria in order to show continuous improvement. The applicant identified 8 performance measures and the rationale for selecting these measures in order to improve student achievement and decrease the achievement gap for the selected subgroups.</p> <p>The applicant did not include further details or description to elaborate on how these measures will be used to provide rigorous and timely feedback for the performance measures as it relates to their applicable population (middle-school students):</p>		

- Details to support how this plan will impact the academic growth for grades PreK-3
- Details to support how this plan will impact grade appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator for grades 4-8
- Details to support how this plan will impact at least one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator for grades 9-12

The applicant did not provide detailed information in the following areas to assess the quality of the proposed activities:

- Timeline to demonstrate how activities will be implemented and monitored
- Deliverables to determine the success of the outcomes
- Persons responsible for the implementing, monitoring, and assessing of key goals and activities

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has set forth a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan has not been met. Although, the plan includes the rationale and key goals for meeting this criteria, the proposal lacks the details and explanation necessary for a high-quality plan.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top-District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and impact student achievement, productively use time, staff, money, or other resources in order to continuously improve its plan.

The applicant did not provide detailed information in the following areas, making it hard for the reviewer to assess the quality of the proposed activities:

- What data will be measured for ongoing improvement
- Specific benchmarks for quarterly data
- Specific reports for each one of the stakeholders group
- Measurement criteria that will be monitored and shared

Overall, the applicant does not present a high quality plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative identifies in great detail how all funds will be used to support this project. RTTD funds are listed as the primary and only funds being used to support the implementation of this project.</p> <p>The budget outlines all the projects and goals (a total of five), personnel, fringe benefits, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual and a category for "other", which the applicant explains these funds will be used to provide training for families, direct costs and indirect costs.</p> <p>The budget aligns to the applicant's to the applicants proposal to implement personalized learning environments and build capacity.</p> <p>The budget does not provide information to identify the funds for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period or what other funding sources will be used to support the implementation of the proposal such as Federal/State/Local monies, grants and foundation support.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant provided evidence of detailed narratives to support the development and implementation of the proposal for personalized learning environments and learning supports for all students, educators, and families, the applicant has not provided documentation to fully support the budget for this projects, resulting in a medium score.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The plan does not separately address this criteria, as it included in the proposal's timeline, as a result the reviewer is unable to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the proposals plan of sustainability of project goals.

The timeline presents a proposal that is innovative and yet ambitious ideas that can support the sustainability of this project after the term of the grant, but there is no evidence that specifically addresses the criteria:

- Revenue sources that will be used to sustain the project
- Savings after the end of the contracts for professional development
- cost for replacing/upgrading devices as technology evolves
- transition of responsibilities for additional personnel hired for the purpose of this project in order to sustain or maintain progress

Overall, the applicant has not provided a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a narrative that details a coherent and logical plan to demonstrate integration of partnerships with public and private sources for this criteria. the applicant does not specifically identify existing partnerships who are currently providing student and family supports. While there is an emphasis on ensuring the resources and partnerships are relevant to the outcomes of this proposal. The applicant did not provide details to demonstrate the specific partnerships that provide targeted interventions needed for whole child reform; these should support students social, emotional or behavioral needs

- how families will be engaged in the process
- how partnerships will use data to support students and their families
- specific performance measures to achieve the population-level desired results

Overall, the applicant has not fully demonstrated a proposal to support all the criteria for competitive preference priority because the plan lacks details to support how this plan will integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal meets the criteria of coherently and comprehensively addressing the core educational assurance areas to create a personalized learning environment to improve learning and teaching. The proposal demonstrates the components to implement and sustain personalized learning environments for students who face academic challenges as a result of living in rural areas. This proposal demonstrates a willingness to address one of the many challenges faced by the targeted population of students who attend schools and communities who are in need of access to the appropriate tools academic and supportive communities in order to graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Overall, the applicants plan demonstrates how it will build on the core educational assurance areas in order to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve teaching and learning in order to meet Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	122
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