



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0101OH-1 for Cincinnati City School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a compelling vision to personalize the student learning environments around core educational assurance areas aligned with graduation requirements and college- and career-ready readiness standards, and to significantly accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by increasing the effectiveness of educators through intense professional development.

A key component of the applicant's vision is to create a new technology platform to scale widely throughout the district in the coming years. Upgrading its technology infrastructure to support personalized learning will take place in three phases:

- 1) Assimilate student data from a variety of existing data collection tools into an Information Integration System (IIS);
- 2) Develop a Personalized Learner Portfolio (PLP) platform that bridges all digital assessment and data collection tools with a single-user sign-on for each student; and
- 3) Design a student "Playbook" application that will pull data from the IIS (learning styles, assets, career interests of each student, assessments scores, etc.) into the PLP to engage students in the learning process and encourage student directed pathways for academic coursework, project-based learning, and career exploration.

The applicant believes that this will help students to personalized interventions (social, emotional, academic, etc.), mentorship, and guidance in achieving academic mastery at their own pace, level, and career direction and that this personalized focus and increased technology infrastructure will, in turn, support increased student academic achievement and deepen student learning in the long-term. The applicant's vision is to use this effort to expand the role of teachers and principals within its 7-12 schools as facilitators of learning, rather than deliverers of knowledge. The expectation is that teachers also will help students apply critical skills through internships, authentic learning opportunities, and real world experiences through the support of principals, coaches, and Resource Coordinators.

The goals and activities proposed by the district, such as those described above, demonstrate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that merits the full number of points available for this criterion.

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

The applicant describes a comprehensive approach to selecting schools to participate in this project. At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, the applicant implemented a reconfiguration of its existing structure from a PreK-8 model to a 7-12 high school model. According to the applicant, this restructuring, along with the recently released Ohio Department of Education 2012-13 school report cards strongly guided the selection of the targeted schools and grade levels for this proposal. The district is particularly interested in supporting incoming middle school students with innovative bridge programming to facilitate a successful transition through two very formative years (grades 7 and 8) into four successful years of secondary education (grades 9-12). While the project is aimed at serving all students in grades 7-12, particular emphasis will be placed on serving students in district's lowest performing schools.

The school district has established an Academic Excellence Committee to discuss creative ways to address a reform vision that would not only increase personalized learning within the district, but enhance student academic achievement, support great teachers, provide equitable access to learning, and turn around some the district's most struggling schools. The recently released 2012-13 school report cards, alongside a district-wide needs assessment, identified gaps in achieving these goals, particularly within grades 7-12. As a result, the committee identified a district-wide need within the district's secondary schools to focus on scaling up personalized learning environments, as well as creating methods to identify needs of academic

interventions based on individual student achievement data. The committee reviewed each 7-12 school (along with K-12 and K-8 schools housing 7-8 grades) to determine eligibility as based on RTTT-D guidelines.

Given these factors, the applicant proposes a high-quality plan to address its secondary schools and students who are “in the middle,” while continuing to support its lowest achieving secondary schools.

The district’s senior management team, along with the Federation of Teachers and the district’s largest educational partner, the Strive Partnership, elected to serve all 7-12 students across the district. As a result this project will serve approximately 11,200 students in grades 7-12 across 21 schools in collaboration with approximately 540 participating educators. As a district, 72% of all enrolled students are identified as Economically Disadvantaged. For the proposed project, the district will serve approximately 7,650 students classified as Economically Disadvantaged, 68% of total students represented within these schools. These figures meet both the required 2,000 minimum of students participating and the percentage of students meeting the Free and/or Reduced Lunch requirements as outlined in the eligibility requirements. This project also will allow the district to place special emphasis on serving those students ranked as high-need, including students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students living in poverty, are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, are credit deficient, or are English Language Learners and at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time. The proposed project will serve at least 7,650 high-need students, approximately 68% of total students represented within this request.

Based on the detailed information provided, the applicant has described an approach that addresses all three components of this criterion. As a result, the applicant is awarded the full points available for this criterion.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents an overall vision to scale up its reform efforts to eventually include all schools. The applicant's approach includes operating in partnership with local businesses, community leaders, parent groups, and the students themselves to deepen its existing models of reform, while at the same time, implementing a system of personalized learning that customizes strategies, resources, and learning experiences for all students with many collaborative partners and resources.

Its main partner in these initiatives is the Strive Partnership which unites key stakeholders (early learning leaders, superintendents, college presidents, funders, business leaders, and service providers) to provide a collaborative sense of leadership and coordinated governance around a shared commitment to values, principles, goals, and outcome measurements. This work actively supports and strengthens evidence-based interventions along the educational continuum to drive better results and increase access to both formal and non-formal educational systems. The applicant also believes that its personalized learning approach, which will use college and career readiness standards to influence educational courses and academic enrichment opportunities, will significantly improve student academic achievement through a multitude of “smart” technology platforms that drive student engagement in their own learning.

For teachers, this approach aims to increase teacher effectiveness through a comprehensive professional development plan and improve learning environments by increasing student access to the most effective teachers, regardless of what school building they teach in.

The applicant believes that its approach holds promise for creating a sustainable model that delivers measurable results and will be effective across the district, the region, and to school districts nationwide. The applicant proposes that the creation of a Personalized Learner Portfolio, Integrated Information System, and the use of a “Playbook” will provide a strategy that can be seamlessly implemented into the remainder of primary schools within the district in the coming years, as well as serve as a template for other schools districts looking to implement similar instructional strategies. Front-end expenses to create the platform of the PLP, IIS and the Playbook will occur in the first one to two years of the project. But, the applicant maintains that future use of the platform in all of its schools will require considerably less resources as the infrastructure will already be in place for implementation.

In its efforts to scale personalized learning district- wide, the district will continue to pursue agencies for partnership, and in establishing a Community Learning Center model in all schools (neighborhood hubs that offer “wrap-around” services), particularly secondary schools where mentorship, internships, individualized tutoring, project-based learning, and career planning and preparation are paramount. The applicant routinely meets with a panel of leading funders to discuss achievement and progress of schools that operate under the CLC model and collaboratively identify areas for expansion and future partnership with other philanthropic leaders in the community.

The activities and initiatives described above indicate that the applicant has a strong vision to expand and scale-up its reform efforts from this project to the entire school district. However, the applicant failed to describe specific

steps of a high- quality plan to accomplish LEA reform and change. So, although this criterion is scored in the high-range of possible points it does not receive the full number of points available.

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

10

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes annual goals in the areas of achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment, as well as postsecondary degree attainment. The summative assessments used include the Ohio Academic Assessment used for Grades 7 and 8 Reading and Math. The Ohio Graduation Test is used for Grade 10 Reading and Math. The methodology for determining status includes the percentage of students at or above Proficiency in Grades 7, 8, and 10 in Reading and Math. The methodology used for determining growth (e.g., value-added, mean growth percentile, change in achievement levels) was to calculate the change in achievement levels from year to year. In order for the district to achieve state academic indicators for the Ohio Academic Assessment and Ohio Graduation Tests, students must score at least 80% or above to be considered "Proficient." The achievement gaps in Reading and Math at grades 7, 8, and 10 were calculated as the difference between 2012-13 proficiency levels and reaching the desired 80% proficiency levels as required through the OAA and OGT assessments to achieve state indicators. State proficiency averages were also listed as comparison groups. The district noted that it will work to reduce these academic achievement gaps throughout the project, as indicated by the decreasing gaps within the subgroups and the district as a whole.

The goals described are ambitious, but should be achievable based on the applicant's vision for reform and activities proposed for this project. But, while the district describes many goals that are ambitious in regard to current levels there appear to be some omissions. Only goals for grades 7, 8 and 10 are provided, although grades 7-12 are included in the project. In addition, high school graduation rates are not provided for Hispanic or American Indian students. Some goals also do not appear to reflect accurate calculations. For example, in 7th grade math the achievement gaps between district students and students statewide do not match and the projected decrease in gaps, post-grant, do not appear to be significant. For these reasons, applicant does not describe a comprehensive vision for improved outcomes for all students and the full value of points is not awarded for this criterion.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching and has been engaged in efforts to improve student learning. For instance, the district is involved with the Ohio Improvement Process to systemically and systematically align district and school improvement efforts to meet the identified needs of all children, and has become a national model in many of its reform measures related to turnaround, STEM, community engagement, and instructional improvement systems. The district has also begun efforts to understand and implement new state and national college and career readiness standards within the district. The district has made some progress towards closing the graduation gap between Caucasian and minority students, and in 2012-13, the district's graduation rate was 66%, an increase of 2 percentage points from the 2011-12 graduation rate of 63.9%.

The applicant describes several major initiatives to increase student achievement in low-performing schools. For instance, the Elementary Initiative (EI) was created in 2008 as a response to a Board of Education directive to accelerate student achievement in the lowest performing elementary schools. A program in 16 buildings focused on data-analysis to guide the following outcomes:

- Evidence-based decisions;
- Individualized learning plans aligned to state and district assessments;
- Implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies;
- Development of customized student-centered classrooms;
- Job-embedded professional development and collaboration for educators;
- Realignment of Instructional Support Teams to concentrate on high-priority schools; and
- Implementation of a new principal evaluation system aligned to the district's strategic plan.

The district also instituted the "5th Quarter," a program following the last day of school continuing for five weeks into the summer. This program emphasizes acceleration versus remediation and places K-7 students in rigorous academic programming based on upcoming content for the child's next school year.

Extensive professional development in curriculum content and differentiated instruction was also provided for teachers through the EI program. All instructional time, both during the school year and in the summer months, was aligned to school-day curriculum and after-school curriculum, including all pre-school programs in EI targeted schools increasing to full-day programs aligned with CPS's K-8 curriculum. Resource coordinators were placed in all high priority elementary schools to engage families and cultivate targeted, effective external support from local foundations, businesses, community organizations and higher educational institutions.

In less than two years after district launched the EI program, 13 of 16 targeted schools showed measurable improvement in overall student achievement. Seven of the 16 targeted schools jumped one or two categories on the 2009-2010 Ohio Report card as issued by the Ohio Department of Education and six of these schools met all federal accountability targets for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2009-2010. Prior to the Elementary Initiative, our district was ranked as Continuous Improvement for six years, hovering near Academic Watch. Efforts to turn around the previously low performing elementary schools allowed the district to move up into an Effective rating – the first time ever for CPS and the first urban school district in Ohio at that time to achieve an Effective rating.

The applicant describes effective efforts to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. It created the Building Futures Dashboard as a customized, performance-based reporting tool with internal and external capabilities to transform the way data is used in schools and classrooms. In combination with the use of the PowerSchool student information system, student performance data is accessible in the dashboard by students, parents, teachers, and administrators throughout the district. Data includes state assessment scores, benchmark assessment scores, attendance, discipline, course grades, college entrance exams, nationally normed tests, early childhood assessments and more. The internal Dashboard embeds instructional decision-making tools (e.g., state standards and indicators, curriculum and pacing guides, model lessons aligned with state standards) within the data system. Teachers and administrators can view assessment results quickly and easily. For example, teachers can view data by student, grade level indicator, cluster of indicators, items, or student subgroups to monitor progress and instructional decision-making. Teachers also can identify which students should be targeted for enrichment (i.e., students answered all related questions correctly), continued practice to maintain learning (i.e., answered most questions correctly), and re-teaching (i.e., answered most questions incorrectly) on particular indicators.

The activities and initiatives described above are strong evidence of the district's success in improving and advancing student learning. However, detailed information regarding improvements in student achievement and in closing gaps in areas identified by this criterion is not provided, therefore the full value of points is not awarded, although it is scored in the high-range of available points.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The school district's publicly available Building Futures Dashboard gives the community detailed up-to-date financial data for both the district and each individual school. Community members can see how much of the district's general und budget and how much of each school's budget has been spent year to date. The public can also drill down to see how much each school spends per pupil each year. The district's finance team is currently looking into ways of improving the reporting process including starting the budget process earlier in the school year to provide more planning time, providing new tools for employees to develop budgets and to track spending in real time, and providing more performance-based financial data for decision-makers.

According to the applicant, the Superintendent hosted a series of Budget Engagement Roundtables to gather public feedback for the 2013-14 budgeting process and administered a survey in the spring of 2013 to give stakeholders the opportunity to express what programs and services they regarded as most valuable to children. This effort also allowed the district to gather information on each participant's awareness of CPS' budget issues and steps the district already has taken to reduce costs. More than 4,000 individuals participated in this survey.

Teacher and administrator classification and salary ranges are made publicly available within the collective bargaining agreement on the district's intranet web site, StaffNet. Actual staff salaries also are made public through the Board meeting minutes posted on the district web site following each Board meeting. In all, the district ensures the following items are readily available to the public through the StaffNet web site and Board minutes, including:

- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances;
- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only;
- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and
- Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level (if available).

The district does provide processes in which information required by this criterion is made available to individuals. However, it isn't clear if these processes rise to a high level of transparency. For instance, it isn't clear if the intranet (StaffNet) is readily available to the entire community or just to the internal staff of the school district. Based on the information provided this criterion is scored in the middle of the high range of possible points.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a context for support and flexibility from the state for school reform efforts. The applicant notes that the state is a national leader in educational reform and student academic success and asserts that part of the district's ability to continue to implement proactive programs to address student's needs is the open dialogue educators and administrators enjoy with the Ohio Department of Education, state official, legislators, and other policy makers. The Center for the Teaching Profession is an organizational unit within the Ohio Department of Education focused on teaching and improving Ohio's education human-capital management system. According to the applicant, the Center's staff communicates regularly with district administrators regarding important state educator reform initiatives, including teacher and principal evaluations, certification and licensure requirements, and professional development opportunities.

The information the applicant provides indicates that there are conditions under which the school district is granted a great deal of flexibility and autonomy by the state. However, the information does not describe specific ways in which the state has and does provide autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. While the applicant has provided information to score this criterion in the high range, it is not sufficient to award it the full value of points.

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

15

12

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes activities to obtain meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. The project was developed in collaboration with CPS Offices of Research and Evaluation, Information Technology Management, and College and Career Technology. CPS leaders, administrators, and teachers all have shown support for the district's proposed focus on student driven personalized learning environments, including the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) leadership team. Additionally, a partnership with the Strive Partnership played a role in bringing together key stakeholders, as well as the support of community partners named throughout the proposal. The following stakeholder groups were involved in the project design and will continue to be partners throughout the project implementation, as part of the district's continued commitment to improvement, transparency and student, parent, and community engagement:

- 1) CPS Board of Education
- 2) CPS Academic Excellence Committee
- 3) CPS Curriculum Managers
- 4) CPS Principals/Assistant Principals
- 5) CPS Parents for Public Schools
- 6) Cincinnati Federation of Teachers
- 7) Strive Partnership

There are letters of support in the appendices from various stakeholders within the community. But, while there is information provided by the applicant regarding a number of stakeholders participating in various aspects of the proposal development, the information is generic and does not describe specific activities and procedures used to involve stakeholders, particularly students and parents. As a result, this criterion is not awarded the full value of points available.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes an effective plan to provide students with a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready through a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;

Students will have access to rigorous courses of study co-constructed by teachers and students, facilitated through the use of an Information Integration System (IIS) and to help them move beyond predictable, one size fits all lessons, resources, and strategies. The IIS will use algorithms to make meaning of diverse student data points and house them in a Personalized Learner Portfolio (PLP) for each student. The PLP will feature a single user sign-in and offer access to multiple digital applications tailored to the user, including student, teacher, and community dashboards, student information systems, learning management systems, student email, digital content-instruction-assessment systems, college and career planning software, calendars, planning tools, and tools for collaboration.

A key element of program implementation will be the use of a student Academic Success Plan (ASP) by the district, which is an individual learning plan to set goals for each student's academic improvement based on current levels of academic achievement. Housed in the PLP, each student will receive tailored Playbook "plays" to suggest enrichment and afterschool activities based on data in their ASP and the IIS. These activities and programs will be aligned with the Ohio Standards and may include enhanced study opportunities, arts enrichment, health and fitness programs, service learning opportunities based on student interest and classroom curriculum pacing guides, as well as integrated learning opportunities for practice, intervention, or enrichment to bolster a student's academic progress.

The applicant's plan includes activities and processes to allow students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. Teachers will work with each student to ensure an Academic Success Plan is created and appropriate grade level tasks and milestones are determined. As part of the district's focus on personalized learning, this data will be loaded into each student's PLP, where they will be encouraged to respond and engage with the suggested "plays" in the Playbook application to plan out college/career readiness goals, participate in advanced course offerings, take advantage of afterschool tutoring, mentorship, career exploration, and so forth.

The district also will ensure that parents are involved in these profiles as well, allowing parents to check on every aspect of their child's education. The district will provide training, support, computer access at school, and enhanced opportunities for every parent to interact with teachers and with the school in ways that work for them. This will promote personalized learning recommendations for students based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and available content, instructional approaches, and supports.

The applicant's plan describes a program to give students access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments, including high-quality content, digital learning content (as appropriate), aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Providing on-going data exchanges between high schools and higher education institutions to promote greater student mobility and college success. Students also will use the Playbook to develop long-range projects. These projects will use "driving questions" explicitly aligned to Social Studies, Science, and Math standards, as well as ELA skills as outlined in Ohio's College and Career Readiness Standards. Rubrics will guide these performance-based tasks, while the development of these questions will be facilitated through research tools accessed through the PLP. Common access to working documents, links, and other resources including model projects through the PLP will enhance this collaborative feature of the Playbook. After a student completes each learning experience in the projected timeline, students will document and assess their learning, providing the IIS with data to generate accurate next steps and adapt the student's future recommended learning experiences.

Access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning is also described as part of the applicant's plan. A citywide magnet school offering immersion and partial immersion curriculums aimed at fluency in French or Spanish; the Academy of World Languages, a magnet program offering Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and English as a Second Language; and Fairview-Clifton German Language School, a magnet school with a German-language based curriculum. With many of the district's schools operating under the Community Learning Center (CLC) model, the school district has successfully forged partnerships with over 600 community and service partners, exposing students to support program that include tutoring, mentorship, arts and culture enrichments, internships/job shadowing, health services and more.

The applicant's plan will help ensure personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and available content, instructional approaches, and supports. Working collaboratively with family and school staff to utilize their individualized PLP and Playbook, students will become active participants in setting three annual college and career readiness goals; one academic, one career, and one social emotional. Teacher mentors will provide encouragement,

guidance and support to students through regular meetings, ongoing dialogue, and reflective activities to aid in setting and achieving these goals. The student Playbook will serve as a digital home for documenting and monitoring performance-based progress toward meeting goals and achieving necessary academic benchmarks, promoting quick action by the student, their family, and school staff if the student falls behind or is off track.

School Resource Coordinators will connect students with community partners and/or other school resources when additional support is needed to further student progress. Student-led conferences with families and teachers will allow students to proactively own progress and strategic planning of their educational future. Project-based and problem-based learning are both key elements of capstone projects, and the intentional inclusion of both make the capstone experience unique among similar culminating projects.

For the 2013-14 school year, the school district will continue to use Naviance a digital platform for grades 7-12. Naviance allows school counselors, teachers, and community partners to increase productivity with their students, providing a method to track results. An element in successful project implementation will be routine student-teacher conferences, directed by the student and facilitated by the teacher. These structured meetings will provide the opportunity for a vested mentor to vet Playbook recommendations, surface student obstacles, help problem-solve, and provide personal guidance on next steps with each student. This component should be helpful in balancing the digital curriculum, student performance, and teacher-level planning utilizing a relational coaching element to engage the student.

English language learners will have access to translation tools in the Playbook that will assist in using the personalized profile to monitor and plan for long-term academic success. These students also will have additional resources to support their proficiency in the English language in order to achieve mastery of CCSS knowledge and skills. Students with disabilities will have access to adaptive strategies and tools to propel them beyond the barriers they currently face. Instruction will be differentiated for these students, as educators receive professional development, resources, and technical assistance to support a diverse array of cognitive abilities within a personalized learning environment.s part of the each student's personalized growth plan. The district will make available multiple training opportunities involving the Playbook, its purpose, and successful implementation of the Playbook in everyday school life. Students also will receive intense instruction on how to create profiles within the Playbook, how to access and manage their profile, and ways in which to use the Playbook, its capabilities, and their student data to drive their educational path across a variety of devices, including smart phones, tablets, etc. These educational opportunities will occur on a regular and consistent basis throughout the school year. Students will have access to new technology content, courses, and career research. Blended learning and technology coaches also will be used to help monitor implementation and improve student use of the Playbook.

All of the above are components of a high quality plan to accomplish the varied elements involved in this criterion. The one element that the applicant does not explain well is the one involving high needs students. Other than ELL's and students receiving special education services, other high needs students are not addressed. In addition, the discussion of students receiving special education students is limited and lacking in sufficient detail. For those reasons, the applicant does not receive the full value of points for this criterion.

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

The applicant describes an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students, in particular high-need students. The applicant provides a detailed discussion of these approaches. Extended professional time will be allotted to teachers participating in the program, allowing for on-site training led by lead teachers, Common Core coaches, and blended learning coaches. Teachers also will be given opportunities to work collaboratively within teams to develop content and course materials for additional online and AP classes available to students. This approach will allow increased access for students to highly effective teachers, as instructors are able to adapt their current styles of teaching to accommodate greater numbers of students from schools throughout the district. As part of the each instructor's personalized growth plan, the district will make available multiple training opportunities involving the Playbook, its purpose, successful implementation in the classroom, and ways in which to use the platform's capabilities to enhance classroom instruction.

These training opportunities will take place on a regular basis throughout the school year. Teachers also will have access to model curricula aligned to Common Core and available through the ODE website. Webcasts on the revised standards, model curricula, and personalized learning strategies also will be available for all educators. Teachers will have access to new technology content, along with training and information on differentiated instructional best practices. Common Core, Blended learning, and Technology Coaches will be used to help monitor implementation and improve use of the Playbook, online curriculum and various blended learning classroom strategies as teachers become accustomed to new ways of

teaching, guiding, and mentoring their students. Professional development trainings, online curriculum, the use of Naviance and the Playbook in tandem with the district's Building Futures Dashboard and Learning Partner Dashboard will be provided to create a foundation of high-quality resources and tools for educators to make data driven decisions that are tailored to their student's needs and progress.

Principals will continue to monitor building level teaching and learning, adding components of the Personalized Learner Profile and student Playbook implementation into observations and evaluation. Principals will hold regular data meetings with teachers, intervention specialists, paraprofessionals and community partners facilitated by data reports.

As part of the teacher evaluation system teachers define Professional Development goals that inform, change and/or enhance their practice. The teacher and their evaluator selected these goals collaboratively. Some teachers also chose a district goal selected by the Superintendent as part of a Strategic Compensation Pilot. These goals focused on the achievement gaps in student subgroups. Teachers will participate in professional and personal career surveys in order to develop an educator profile. The IIS will integrate both student and teacher data into a recommendation of professional development opportunities, visible to the teacher on their Playbook profile. Using online courses and web-based community forums, teachers will be able to participate in a series of professional development opportunities geared towards their content areas. Additionally, teachers will consult with administrators to evaluate past professional development, and select new courses. Through this program, teachers will engage in regular dialogue with other teachers and partners who work with his or her students, both to monitor student progress and to gain perspective on a student's instructional pathway. Connected education will provide opportunities for students, parents, and educators to build on-line learning communities with resources from around the globe, allowing for students to be supported in the hours they are not in school.

The applicant describes approaches to working collaboratively to provide professional development for its teachers in content and pedagogy. Professional development offerings for teachers will focus on building staff capacity in areas such as project-based/inquiry learning, career development and guidance, blended learning, use of technology and software, data analytics, student- centered/formative assessments using multiple demonstrations of learning, universal design of learning, teaching English to speakers of other languages credential, response to Intervention, cooperative learning and developing strong student learning objectives. Professional development will be collaborative and continuous with face-to-face workshops blended with online offerings to create a timely and meaningful growth environment for all staff including teachers, para-professionals, and district leadership.

Opportunities to access professional development will also be provided over the summer, during the school day through district- wide scheduled staff development days, and in scheduled learning team meetings scheduled throughout the school year. In addition, Blended Learning Coaches will provide job imbedded coaching in content and instructional practices that integrate information communication technologies into all aspects of their learning environments. District and school administration will lead and support teachers with implementing innovative instructional practices to facilitate student driven learning.

The applicant's plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas will revolve around the GOLD program. The rationale supporting the GOLD Program design and activities follows a logic of recruiting talent, developing talent, managing talent and supporting talent, and provides a multi-tiered approach to professional development and mentorship for teachers and assistant principals/principals in schools identified by the Ohio Department of Education as persistently low-performing schools, as well as an intense hands-on residency training program for teacher leaders to move toward principal licensure. The program will focus on helping participants master essential school leadership and instructional skills and create positive school environments, enabling school administrators and teachers to enhance instruction aligned to college- and career-readiness standards and raising student academic achievement.

Based on the evidence provided by the applicant a high-quality plan is in place that should meet all of the requirements of this criterion. Therefore, the full value of points available is awarded.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes an environment and culture within the school district to support innovation and change in regard to improving student learning. The Board's vision, mission and strategic goals for 2013-14 are:

- 1) Equip the district to encounter and engage each child in a manner that ensures his/her individual success;
- 2) Improve and sustain a child-centered safe school district focused on schools as the center of a safe community;
- 3) Encourage and create a culture of shared leadership, accountability and transparency in which everyone is achieving his/her highest level of development; and
- 4) Create opportunities for students to become contributing members of local and global societies. The district's Central Office is designed to strengthen administrative effectiveness and improve support to schools with a primary focus to "develop and implement strategies that build high-performing schools and achieve high-quality education for all students."

The district's transformation team, commonly referred to as the Educational Initiative Panel (EIP), serves as the district's strategic planning committee responsible for educational reform measures in compliance with the four assurance areas of the Race to the Top State funding. The EIP is comprised of district leadership from the Superintendent's Office, Office of Innovation, Research Evaluation and Test Administration, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Information & Technology Management, School of Choice Division, and representatives from the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) and selected teachers and principals. Comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, community partners, and students, the Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC) is the primary governing body for each school in the district. This committee gives insight and input into important decisions that greatly impact their students' lives and shape their educational experiences. Membership is comprised of four major constituencies with a minimum of 12 members: three parents selected by the parent group; three community members; three teachers selected by the Instructional Learning Committee (ILC); and three non-teaching staff including the principal, with the other two members selected by their representative group.

Each school in the district is site-based managed allowing for shared governance and leadership. These existing structures create autonomy in classroom scheduling, building level decision-making, flexibility in school programming, a portfolio of schools of choice, innovative practices in and out of the classroom, and a strong emphasis on shared leadership.

The school district's Curriculum Councils are elected bodies established by the CFT (Federation of Teachers) to represent teachers in various subject areas as well as support service professionals. Curriculum Councils work in cooperation with district Curriculum Managers to develop and maintain high-quality curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment instruments to select and/or create high-quality teaching materials. Councils advise Curriculum Managers on current issues of practice and encourage planning professional development activities for their constituents. The district also provides resources for teacher's professional development that supports each school's comprehensive school reform design.

In regard to giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic the applicant describes a process involving using basic principles of project-based learning in which students are guided by teachers in collaborative groups to study units of content that are aligned to Social Studies standards, Science benchmark concepts, English Language Arts informational writing portfolio pieces, and Mathematical skills. Students apply problem-based learning approaches to the projects to create innovative solutions to human problems, such as the development of viable economic systems, preservation of natural resources, and identification of models that support a healthy, rigorous society. In addition, the applicant describes a district-wide dual enrollment agreement that will allow students to take certain courses offered at their high school and receive both high school and college credit.

While the applicant describes a number of elements that address the requirements of this criterion, it does not provide specific information regarding how its plan will give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. For that reason, a score in the mid-range of available scores is given for this criterion.

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

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a plan for ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of this proposal. All teachers participate in Learning Teams at their schools led by Content Innovation Specialists in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. The school-based Learning Teams provide embedded professional development on College and Career Ready Standards, instructional strategies, student learning objectives, value-added training, and more. Teams build understanding of the new standards, utilize Achieve the Core resources (a CPS based professional development program for teachers), develop and share lesson plans with one another, analyze student work, and share best practices in teaching and learning. Additional support for literacy in all content areas is provided through Content Specific Learning Teams. As a result, these teams read, write, speak and listen in their specific content areas and then model the same behaviors with their students. However, this plan does not provide specific details regarding how teachers will be

provide access to tools both inside and outside of school and how they will be trained in the use of those tools.

The applicant also describes a process for ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies. The district’s technology team will provide support and training to all stakeholders involved in project implementation and participation. The district will ensure that all participants have equitable access to training and usage of the new platforms, the ability to access and create a Personalized Learner Profile and access to the resources available as suggested through the new Playbook platform. The district also will track usage of the new platforms and gather feedback from participants throughout the project.

The applicant describes a plan that will ensure that all 7-12 students will have access create personalized learning profiles and sign-ons to access these profiles through the Playbook platform. Within this system, a student will be able to access a broad view to their educational path, while also drilling down to a specific course, test, or assignment. Alongside the student, the applicant also will ensure parental access to and usage of this new application. Parents will be provided information and training to know how to access their child’s data and interpret the results, playing a large part in helping mentor their student to make sound decisions towards their academic career and post-secondary choices.

A parent guide will be created to provide instruction and guidance for parents to create their own sign-ons to access their child’s profile. The data accessed in this profile will help aid the parent in guidance of their child as well as alert them to potential academic pitfalls and provide suggestions on how to best handle the situation. Additionally, school buildings operating as Community Learning Centers (CLC) provide open community rooms and parent computer access. For those parents without computers at home, or in locations where computer access is limited, the district will provide these open labs for parents to use and access their child’s profile. The school’s community Resource Coordinator will be available to work closely with parents to ensure each parent has the knowledge and resources needed to successfully access their child’s data and interpret it.

The applicant reports that it has made considerable progress in achieving a comprehensive and interoperable data system that includes a massive data warehouse, the Building Futures public dashboard and a customized Community Partner Learning dashboard to share data openly and fluidly with teachers, administrators, parents, students, and the community at large. These systems include a multitude of information from student academic achievement, student demographics, enrollment, discipline, attendance, afterschool, health/wellness, and so on. Continuing to build on the district’s recently completed 10-year master facilities plan, current data systems and upgrades planned to the district’s data collection as a result of this project will be interoperable, in an open formant, and easy-to-access for a variety of stakeholders. Currently, the district’s data warehouse and internal dashboard house the confidential student data and provide a tool for teachers and administrators to view academic test scores, student attendance, class profiles, etc. For teachers, these dashboards allow them to view the progress of each individual student and run reports to target individuals for academic enrichment services or the ability to see aggregate data on their entire classroom.

The district provides a very strong plan regarding how it will meet the requirements of this criterion and merits a score in the high-range. However, the lack of specifics in terms of how educators will be supported in using data systems and technology prevent the full value of points being awarded.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does describe some elements of a plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements in the project. Changes in student behavior through effective use of research-based instructional strategies will be considered leading indicators of progress, while student achievement scores will emphasize that effective teaching with student support strategies yields higher student achievement. Additionally, the district will continue its participation in the Ohio Improvement Process.

This process will include the use of District Leadership Team, Building Leadership Teams, and Teacher Based Teams to monitor progress and ensure the tasks, actions and strategies are on-course and on-schedule in meeting set goals as measured by progress against indicators. Various teams will be responsible for monitoring the actions and strategies needed to make the plan work and will schedule meetings regularly to assess how the plan is being implemented, progress to plan indicators, discuss problems being faced, and examine the efficiency of program implementation. This progress-monitoring framework has been designed to engage these teams in critical analysis and monitoring of data to assess the extent in which the plan

implementation produces desired results. Frequent monitoring and adjustments to the evaluation plan will be made to ensure desired results.

While the activities described above are strong elements of a plan to monitor progress, it does not rise to the level of a high-quality plan. The applicant does not provide sufficient detail regarding how it will address how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff. As a result, a score in the mid-range of available scores is warranted for this criterion.

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

The applicant describes a multi-faceted plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The district Transformation Team will develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure effective internal and external communication. Communication protocols will be revised to allow for a more seamless and transparent flow of information throughout the school district. The communication plan will embed our district’s RTTT and Teacher Incentive Fund initiatives and promote two-way communication with parents, students, and community members, including:

A monthly Office of Innovation Newsletter sent to parents and community, along with all district personnel; biweekly Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) Newsletters sent to all district teachers; relevant information posted on the CFT website; information sharing at the monthly Executive Committee meetings of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers; information sharing at the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers monthly membership meetings; relevant information posted on the Office of Innovation website; monthly reports created and distributed to the EIP, Board of Education, Principal meetings, and CFT Executive; relevant information shared at public School Board Meetings; relevant information shared at district-wide Local School Decision Making Committee quarterly meetings; weekly RTTT Office Meetings with project team leaders; relevant information shared at quarterly district-wide LSDMC Meetings; participation in local radio & cable television call-in opportunities, and social media sharing through Twitter, Facebook, etc.; relevant information shared at quarterly Community Conversations held at district schools; "Question of the Week" surveys for district personnel administered; student surveys (i.e. M.O.R.E. Clubs), etc. administered; and creation of a professional development course to support schools with their communication efforts.

These activities are evidence of a high-quality plan to meet the requirements of this criterion in regard to describing a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. As a result, the full value of points is awarded.

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

The applicant provides a plan that includes ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each measure, the applicant describes its rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant’s implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. For instance, the district has selected the number of grade 8 students enrolled in Algebra 1 with the ability to receive high school credit as the main academic indicator. The rationale is that the rigor of this class is appropriate for 8th grade students to be prepared for high school and eventually post-secondary continuation of their educational career. For the social emotional health indicator, the applicant has identified several pieces of data to determine the overall social emotional health of students. First, the applicant will collect student involvement data in participation to the school outside of the regular class schedule to help gauge connectedness of the student to a community activity. The rationale is that a student’s overall connectedness to the things that research has stated make a positive difference in school performance involves looking at all of the positive activities that students are involved in outside the school day. This will include tracking the involvement of the student in extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, school clubs, and other things that show involvement in some aspect of school.

As a part of the regular instruction throughout the year, each grade level of students will complete online personality assessments, interest surveys and research based on these results. This data will then be used to assist the individual student in developing their own set of three individualized goals each year: one academic goal, one career goal, and one social/emotional health goal. Each student, with facilitation from the teacher, will monitor his or her own goals throughout the year and make adjustments or modifications where necessary.

The performance measures are ambitious because they are established substantially higher than initial levels. They are

likely to be achievable if the applicant provides the resources, services, and activities that are described elsewhere in its proposal. Based on these reasons the applicant is awarded the full value of points for this criterion.

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

The applicant describes a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology that includes some useful and appropriate elements. Program indicators are clearly identified and described. According to the applicant, program evaluation will be ongoing, coordinated by the district’s Research and Evaluation Department, with the support of school and district administrators and will identify SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented and Timely) with specific indicators, data collection methods, regular monitoring checkpoints and status reports. The applicant states that, working collaboratively, it will develop and implement a continuous improvement plan to ensure that project implementation decisions are based on data. Specific tasks related to this role will be to:

- 1) Collect baseline data to aid in planning;
- 2) Ensure that outcome objectives and performance milestones are determined;
- 3) Develop a continuous improvement process;
- 4) Monitor progress on objectives and performance milestones as part of the continuous improvement process; and
- 5) Provide data updates on program progress on a quarterly basis.

Process outcomes will be monitored to determine if adequate progress is being made toward these objectives and find any discrepancies between what was proposed and what is being implemented. Program staff will interview participants and individuals who delivered services to give a comprehensive picture of the project’s implementation – helping to build on our district’s strengths and to rework any areas that may not be providing the expected outcomes. Existing data measures and collecting methods will be leveraged to develop new measures where needed. One of the key elements of determining change in instructional practice within the classroom will be the use of Instructional Rounds conducted by administrators, coaches and teacher leaders.

While the applicant has outlined a broad approach to program evaluation it does not reach level of a high-quality plan. It lacks specifics regarding the process to collect, analyze and use evaluation data. Inadequate details are providing regarding the data to be collected, who will be collecting it and the type of analysis that will be conducted. While some attention is provided to the evaluation of professional development activities, less is provided regarding other aspects of the applicant's proposed project. For those reasons this criterion is rated in the middle range of available scores.

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 provides a narrative that identifies the overall structure and needs to be addressed by the budget. While the district already has in place many aspects of technology to support student learning, an overall integration portal will be funded by this grant to bring these systems together into a seamless learning environment for students. A classroom collaboration tool will also be developed for safe, secure communication and collaboration between teachers and students, as well as among students (file sharing, discussion groups, blogs, video chat, homework drop down, etc.). In addition, district-wide digital curriculum sources will be provided to deliver best practices and Common Core curriculum content directly to students, including increased online courses and additional AP courses. According to the applicant the budget design is a comprehensive picture of costs for upgrading the district’s technology infrastructure, the creation of the Playbook platform, increased academic offerings, and intense professional development for teachers and administrators. The applicant also identifies expenditures that are one-time coses, those that will continue through the project's funding period and that will be needed after the funding period ends.

The proposed budget identifies total amount of funds from all sources, but does not identify specific sources. The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. The applicant divides the budget into six distinct subprojects focusing on different aspects and components of the overall project and identifies the specific criteria that are addressed by various expenditures. The applicant provides a general description of funds that will be

used for one-time expenditures and those that will be used for ongoing costs, but does not provide details regarding specific expenditures. Based on the information provided, the score for this criterion is in the low end of the high range of total points available.

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

10

10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project’s goals after the term of the grant. It plans to address the following initiatives prior to completion of the four year program:

- 1) Create a strategic plan that adopts steps the district will take to ensure personalized learning remains for 7-12 students and offers actionable steps to scale up personalized learning in primary schools;
- 2) Adopt a Board of Education agreement to wholly support and advocate for personalized learning across the district;
- 3) Create an open door policy that provides opportunities for key stakeholders to participate in program implementation, provide valuable feedback and voice concerns, ideas, and advocacy for the pursuit of blending learning for all students in the district.

The district will focus heavily on increasing the district’s technology infrastructure to provide equitable access to technology for all students and provide intense professional development for teachers and administrators to implement successfully a blended and personalized learning environment within their classroom. A sustainability strategy consisting of eight components is identified and explained as part of the applicant’s approach in meeting this criterion. Based on the information provided, the full value of points available is awarded.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to address this priority by expanding its Community Learning Center (CLC) model from the current 36 schools to all 55 of its schools. A CLC is a school that operates as a community hub, utilizing school space during extended hours, on weekends and during the summer to provide additional academic support, health resources, social services, arts programming, and civic and cultural opportunities to students, their families and the community. The goal of each CLC is to support student achievement, revitalize communities, and maximize the community's return on their financial investment.

Full-time Resource Coordinators, employees from local non-profits under contract with the district, are placed in the centers to manage the partnerships and assure that every new CLC offers a variety of resources, including tutoring, mentoring, after school, health, mental health, college access and other support services that are aligned to the needs and interests of students and families. Data is used to prioritize CLC services at each site and to customize a system of delivery that will successfully support students in achieving their maximum potential. Services offered at CLC schools include tutoring, after school programs, mentoring, health and wellness, college access, youth leadership, and family engagement.

The key partner with the district in developing and implementing this priority is the Strive Partnership which unites key stakeholders (early learning leaders, superintendents, college presidents, funders, business leaders, and service providers) who provide a collaborative sense of leadership and coordinated governance around a shared commitment to values, principles, goals, and outcome measurements. This partnership works to actively support and strengthen evidence based interventions along the educational continuum to drive better results and increase access to formal and non- formal educational systems. The work with the Strive Partnership rallies around five strategic goals and includes a multitude of critical indicators to gauge student success from cradle to career.

The applicant proposes to track selected indicators through Resource Coordinators at each CLC who will monitor whether students are receiving appropriate services and whether data demonstrates a positive impact of project activities and services. While monitoring, Resource Coordinators work with partners to adjust services to maximize potential for impact, or when necessary, terminate partnership services. Resource coordinators at each school manage partnership programs in CLCs and are charged with the alignment of these programs to specific and measurable goals. This process is called REFORM, an acronym that stands for Review, Engage, Focus, Offer Support, Reset and Measure. Through REFORM, Resource Coordinators engage a team of key stakeholders, including the Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC), in looking at community, school, and family data to identify areas where partnership programs can positively impact student

achievement. Resource coordinators are also tasked with using attendance, behavior, core subject grades and test scores (ABCT) to assume a stronger analytical role when allocating community resources.

The applicant intends to scale up the CLC resource coordination pilot to all high schools in the district in order to target resource allocation that positively impacts high school students' education and engagement. Scaling up this model will require intensive work with partnership networks, The Strive Partnership, United Way and other funders, local corporations, and city leaders to identify and engage the necessary community resources to meet the specific needs and interests of these high school students. The process of identifying targeted students and connecting them to resources will be modified for 7-12 grade students to encourage self-selection of resources that will most likely result in improved student outcomes. The digital Playbook described elsewhere in this proposal will include a screen for selecting extra-curricular activities of interest to the students and targeted to a specific academic need. Data will be used to populate an application in the Playbook for each student to promote the selection of those resources most aligned to ABCT needs. For example, academic data indicates that a student is struggling in math, and his career assessment shows an interest in veterinary science. In the Playbook application, a student may be offered the following resources to select: math tutor; internship; job shadowing; career coach; or service learning project. As common in the elementary CLCs, Resource Coordinators will recruit specific community partners to provide support for parents of older students. These community partners will offer programs and activities designed to help parents engage with their children.

The applicant addresses the improvement of results over time by noting that an independent evaluation of the CLC pilot was conducted by Innovations in Community Research at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Their findings for 2011-12 are similar to findings from the previous 2010-11 academic year and indicate that the implementation of the REFORM model using the Learning Partner Dashboard continues to be effective method in marshaling additional resources for priority students. Those students at CLC schools who received community resources had a higher average number of risk factors, yet continued to make important gains on state assessments of math and reading.

The applicant effectively describes how the partnership would integrate education and other services for participating students. Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are designed as community-centered hubs that offer a diverse menu of services and programs focused on transforming schools and revitalizing communities. Services designed to fit the unique needs of each community are made available to students, their families and the entire community. These services can range from after-school programs for students to English as a Second Language classes for whole families. In addition, CLCs can include full-service health clinics, eye centers, dental clinics, mental health counselors, tutoring programs and even classes like ballroom dancing and construction. Services and programs are set up through the CLC resource coordinator who works closely with local partners and nonprofits who are able to address the specific needs of the community.

The applicant will use the REFORM model to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community, identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community supports that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community, and create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results.

At the beginning of each school year, the resource coordinator **REVIEWS** the unique data of each school and community and establishes desired partnership program outcomes or "stakes in the ground" that support academic achievement, address the holistic needs of students, and motivate community stakeholders to share accountability. Partners are recruited and **ENGAGED** at the school site in alignment with CLC goals. Each CLC partner who offers an on-going program, service or activity completes a formal Memo of Understanding (MOU) that includes the "Parameters for Partnerships" guidelines established by the CPS Board of Education Partners are guided to **FOCUS** on the specific, individual needs of students based on the Review process. This process is overseen by Resource Coordinators who target students for resources based on their unique and individualistic needs Resource coordinators **OFFER** support to partners through monthly meetings at the school. At these meetings, progress toward school goals is shared and partners have the opportunity to report on program highlights and challenges. Impact of partnership programs is **MEASURED** both formally and informally. Partners are informed of noticeable impact on a regular basis as Resource Coordinators encourage and support their work.

The applicant describes a partnership to integrate public and private resources to augment school resources that has a number of very strong and effective features and components as described above. However, the population-level results identified by the applicant are very broad and not sufficiently outcome based. In addition, the explanation of how the applicant will track the selected indicators is not adequately described and the applicant does not fully address how it will use the data to target resources to students with significant challenges. The applicant does identify annual performance measures (6), but these are broad and the applicant doesn't sufficiently explain exactly how they will be measured in terms of processes or methods. For these reasons this Competitive Priority is scored in the mid-range of total points available.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. A key component of the applicant's vision is to create a new technology platform to scale widely throughout the district in the coming years. The should help students to personalized interventions (social, emotional, academic, etc.), mentorships, and guidance in achieving academic mastery at their own pace, level, and career direction and that this personalized focus and increased technology infrastructure will, in turn, support increased student academic achievement and deepen student learning in the long-term. The applicant's vision is to use this effort to expand the role of teachers and principals within its 7-12 schools as facilitators of learning, rather than deliverers of knowledge. The expectation is that teachers also will help students apply critical skills through internships, authentic learning opportunities, and real world experiences through the support of principals, coaches, and Resource Coordinators.</p> <p>The district is involved with the Ohio Improvement Process to systemically and systematically align district and school improvement efforts to meet the identified needs of all children, and has become a national model in many of its reform measures related to turnaround, STEM, community engagement, and instructional improvement systems. The district has also begun efforts to understand and implement new state and national college and career readiness standards within the district.</p> <p>The applicant also describes an effective plan to 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; and decrease achievement gaps across student groups. The creation of a Personalized Learner Portfolio, Integrated Information System, and the use of a “Playbook” will provide a strategy that can be seamlessly implemented into the remainder of primary schools within the district in the coming years, as well as serve as a template for other schools districts looking to implement similar instructional strategies. Front-end expenses to create the platform of the PLP, IIS and the Playbook will occur in the first one to two years of the project. But, the applicant maintains that future use of the platform in all of its schools will require considerably less resources as the infrastructure will already be in place for implementation.</p> <p>The district has made some progress towards closing the graduation gap between Caucasian and minority students, and in 2012-13, the district’s graduation rate was 66%, an increase of 2 percentage points from the 2011-12 graduation rate of 63.9%. The applicant describes several major initiatives to increase student achievement in low-performing schools. For instance, the Elementary Initiative (EI) was created in 2008 as a response to a Board of Education directive to accelerate student achievement in the lowest performing elementary schools.</p> <p>A strong plan to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers is also proposed by the applicant. The applicant's plan will help ensure personalized learning recommendations based on the student’s current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and available content, instructional approaches, and supports. Working collaboratively with family and school staff to utilize their individualized PLP and Playbook, students will become active participants in setting three annual college and career readiness goals; one academic, one career, and one social emotional. Teacher mentors will provide encouragement, guidance and support to students through regular meetings, ongoing dialogue, and reflective activities to aid in setting and achieving these goals. The student Playbook will serve as a digital home for documenting and monitoring performance-based progress toward meeting goals and achieving necessary academic benchmarks, promoting quick action by the student, their family, and school staff if the student falls behind or is off track.</p> <p>Based on the information and documentation provided by the applicant it has met the requirements of Absolute Priority 1.</p>		
Total	210	174

Race to the Top - District



Technical Review Form

Application #0101OH-2 for Cincinnati City School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In detailing it's vision, the district outlines it's reform efforts and explains how they tie into the aggressive communication plan already in place to prepare all stakeholders for the transition to the Common Core State Standards and corresponding assessments.</p> <p>a. In linking the proposed reform efforts to the 4 core assurance areas, the district provides evidence of adoption of the Common Core State Standards as well as plans to develop and fully implement a data system to measure growth and inform instruction. In it's chart outlining a high quality plan for reform, the district makes mention of building on turnaround efforts in the Elementary schools. However, while the district describes how it will develop educators, no evidence is provided to detail how it recruits, rewards and retains teachers in high need areas.</p> <p>b. Descriptions are provided to describe how this approach will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning. Through the use of Personalized Learner Profiles which are then linked to the student's Playbook, instruction will be individualized, self-paced and geared directly towards students' needs, interests and goals. Similarly, the Playbook will increase student equity by connecting students with instructors at other sites.</p> <p>c. The district provides a detailed picture of what this experience will look like for both students and teachers are in a given day. Teachers will become facilitators and mentors while students drive their own instruction thus personalizing the learning environment.</p> <p>Overall, the district sets forth a comprehensive and coherent vision that builds on the core assurance areas, articulates a clear and credible approach to student learning, and describes what this environment will look like. The description of the link between data systems, the Personalized Learner Profile and the Playbook will result in a personalization of the learning environment for each student and will likely result in accelerated student achievement, deepened student learning and increasing equity. The district does lack evidence in one of the core assurance areas, however. Thus the district earns a score in the high area in indicator A(1).</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a robust description of the methods used to determine the target population for this grant proposal. Given the changes to the structure of the district and how it configures grade levels and the changes to the state accountability system that puts increased emphasize on how prepared students are for post-secondary outcomes, the district's focus on students in grades 7-12 is appropriate.</p> <p>In evaluating whether or not schools meet the criteria as set forth by the grant, the district provides evidence to show which schools will participate as well as the total number of students, educators, those who are low-income and those identified as high-need. While schools range in the percentage of low income students from a low of 12% to a high of 100%, the district average is 76%. All criteria is met and data is provided in the charts as evidence.</p> <p>Overall, the district has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate high-quality district-level and school-level implementation as they will be implementing in all schools that contain grades 7-12 and will be building off the prior reform efforts in the Elementary grades. Therefore, the district earns full points on indicator A(2).</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In describing it's high quality plan for scaling up and meaningful reform, the district provides a chart with descriptions of</p>		

aspects of the high quality plan. For each of the 4 assurance areas, the district provides inputs, activities, outcomes and long term outcomes. However, elements of a high quality plan are lacking including timeline and persons responsible.

The district works in partnership with a group called Strive Partnership. This is a cradle to adulthood regional partnership. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that the reform proposal can be scaled up to include implementation in the Elementary grades as well as shared at this regional partnership to be replicated in other districts and cities across the country.

Through it's discussion regarding the community engagement model and the Strive Partnership, the district provides sufficient evidence to support a high quality plan for scaled up implementation throughout the district and replication in other communities. While an extensive plan is provided, some elements of a high quality plan including timelines and responsible parties are lacking. However, a comprehensive vision for district wide reform is articulated and thus the district scores in the high areas of indicator A(3).

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides goals for summative assessments for grades 7, 8 and 10 in reading and math, decreasing the achievement gap in grades 7, 8 and 10 in reading and math with comparisons to the state wide average, high school graduation rate disaggregated by subgroup and aggregated college enrollment rates.

The goals provided do demonstrate that the district plans to increase student achievement annually. Growth amongst subgroups is not expected to be equal. For example, in 7th grade Math the district anticipates a growth of almost 4% for Asian students after the first year but a growth of only .58% in the IEP subgroup. No rationale is provided to justify this difference. The same pattern appears in decreasing the achievement gap. The district anticipates a decrease of 12% over the course of the grant in 10th grade Reading but only 4.8% for IEP students.

The targets set for high school graduation rates are ambitious and achievable with targets ranging from 10%-14% increases depending on the subgroup examined.

College enrollment rates are given in aggregate form only with a targeted increase of 2% per year which is not ambitious given the district's methodology of focusing on post-secondary success as 2% is also the percentage of growth given over the 2 baseline years. This means that the reform proposal is estimated to have no impact on increased college enrollment.

Overall, the district fails to provide goals for all grade levels included in the grant as only 7, 8, and 10th grades will be tested. No rationale is provided to demonstrate how goals were determined and there are inconsistencies in targets amongst subgroups both in the summative assessments and decreasing the achievement gaps targets. While graduation rates are ambitious and achievable, college enrollment rate targets are not and no disaggregated data is provided in this area. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator A(4).

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The district provides a list of achievements it's reached in recent years. These include being the first district to reach the effective level on the state report card system. However, there is no data or evidence provided to show a clear record of success in the past 4 years of improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. The district states that high school graduation rates improved 2% over a single year but again 4 years worth of data is not provided. College enrollment data is not presented at all.

b. A reform initiative entitled Elementary Initiative was put in place to address poor performance at the 16 district elementary schools. A comprehensive overview of this reform is presented along with statements that 13 of the 16 schools showed measured improvement over the term of the reform. However, no raw data or clear evidence is presented to demonstrate this improvement.

c. The district has developed a robust data warehouse system called Dashboard. This system provides real time access to

educators, parents, students and community partners in such a way as to help inform instruction and make decisions regarding needed services. The system color codes students for teachers into groups indicating who needs enrichment, reteaching and those who are progressing without requiring additional supports.

The district provides evidence of making performance data available in ways to inform instruction through the use of Dashboard. Statements are made to suggest that the district was the first in the state to achieve an effective rating, however it lacks evidence of a clear record of success over the past 4 years. Student achievement data, closing the achievement gap, college enrollment rates and 4 years worth of graduation rate data are not provided. Descriptions of the Elementary Initiative reform program are included but again no data is provided to support the statement that 13 of the 16 schools showed improvement in student performance. Therefore, the district scores in the middle range on indicator B(1).

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district maintains a transparent budget data system entitled Building Funding Dashboard. This allows anyone in the community to see district and individual school level budgets as well as how much has been expended already in the current year. The district states that on an internal website, salary ranges are provided and that actual staff salaries are available through Board minutes.

While the district states that it makes personnel salaries available through the internal website and board minutes, there is no evidence provided to justify that it does so in the manner required (salaries at the school level for various classifications). Additionally, the public would not have access to an internal website to gain access to this information. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator B(2).

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

As Ohio is a Race To The Top state, the state department of education has adopted policies and practices to support personalized learning environments. Evidence is provided by the district to demonstrate that goals at the state level specifically allow for a personalized approach to instruction based on student need. This evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that the district has met the requirement of demonstrating successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement it's plan of utilizing a digital blended learning system called the Playbook. Thus the district earns full points on indicator B(3).

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	6
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a. The district provides a list of the various stakeholders who were involved in the development of the grant. These include formal groups within the district and community structures and does include groups of teachers, parents, administrators, district personnel, the board, and community members. However, there is no evidence provided to suggest how they were involved in the process nor how the proposal was revised based on their input. Additionally, while the district states that it met regularly with the President of the collective bargaining agent, it does not provide evidence of support from this organization for the plan.

b. In the appendix, letters of support are provided from 10 individuals representing both local and state governments and community organizations.

While the district states it met with various stakeholders regarding the proposal, it does not provide evidence of meaningful engagement in the development. Letters of support are provided from 10 individuals representing government and community but none from the collective bargaining agent, student groups, parent groups or higher ed. Therefore, the district scores in the medium range based on the lack of evidence of meaningful engagement from all required groups.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The district organizes their discussion around 3 key features that will capitalize on student motivation: goal setting, student choice and management of their own learning and high-quality learning through real world experiences. The district accurately identifies student motivation as the key component of student success in learning. This aligns to self-efficacy and self-determination and teachers will coach and mentor students through activities that build advocacy skills and problem solving through goal setting and monitoring. This will result in students taking ownership of their own learning as well as students seeing how their current learning connects to the goals they've set. They will be able to monitor their own progress towards these goals through their dashboard. Through the various technology programs and digital portfolios, a Playbook will be populated with apps that students will utilize to engage in deeper learning experiences in their areas of interest. Enrichment, intervention and exploration will all be possible in this system. Through the use of magnet schools and through community partnerships as well as distance learning opportunities, the district provides ample evidence of exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives.

b. The district provides evidence of how the sequence of instruction will be personalized based on the Playbook platform. Courses and learning experiences will be recommended through this system based on the data profile of the student. Blended learning opportunities will be available through online courses that are not offered at a particular school site as well as project based interdisciplinary projects. Students will engage in real life application connections that will accelerate learning. This will culminate in a Capstone presentation that utilizes 21st century skills. Teachers will meet with students regularly to guide and mentor them in their projects and to engage in discussions regarding how students are progressing towards goals. Evidence is provided to ensure that all experiences in the Playbook will be aligned and correlated with the Common Core standards as well as 21st century skills. Software will be engaged to guide students in the exploration of post secondary options and track their progress towards these goals. As new data becomes available through reflective pieces or formative assessments, the Playbook will update in real time and provide new recommendations based on the student's progress or lack there of. Finally, evidence is provided to detail how high need students can receive accommodations and modifications in the system based on individual need. Translation tools and other resources will be built in as well as adaptive strategies and tools to support language and special needs. Other goals and objectives from such documents and Individualized Education Plans will be integrated into the system to provide a holistic view of student needs. On demand, performance based assessments will also be available.

c. Evidence is provided to detail how the district will train students in the use of these tools. Training will be ongoing and occur at regular time frames throughout the school year. One on one coaching will also occur with teachers as well as blended learning coaches and technology coaches. Students will be encouraged to Bring Your Own Technology and the Playbook is accessible 24/7 from anywhere on any type of device (smart phone, tablet, etc.). The school computer labs will also have extended hours to allow for greater accessibility.

Overall, the district provides extensive evidence of a plan to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the school environment so that all students have the support to graduate college and career ready. A robust digital system called Playbook will engage students in setting their own learning targets and selecting activities in the form of Apps to build skills needed for their goals. Descriptions are provided to show how students will be in charge of their pathway and teachers will become coaches and mentors. Details of comprehensive courses and learning opportunities are provided to demonstrate how learning will be extended beyond the classroom and will become embedded in real world experiences. Information is presented to show how these experiences will be determined based on current data on the student and student areas of interest will supports provided to provide equity of experience.

Finally, documentation of how students will be trained in the use of the Playbook is provided.

This meets the requirements of a high quality plan as goals, activities, corresponding rationales and deliverables are all provided. However, evidence regarding the timeline for these activities and the persons responsible are lacking.

Therefore, the district scores in the high range on indicator C(1).

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district presents 3 overall ideas that focus their plan to assist instructors in improving instruction and increasing the capacity of staff to support student progress in a personalized setting and be college and career ready: analysis of data, targeted professional development, and customization of student's learning experiences.

a. Evidence is provided for an extensive professional development plan to include training by lead teachers, Common Core coaches, blended learning coaches and technology coaches with collaborative conversations in teaching teams to develop and refine curriculum. This will be supported with data systems that will guide teachers to the next steps in their professional development. Those data systems will collect data continuously from activities in the student's Playbook ranging from informal reflective surveys to state mandated testing. This curriculum will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards and will assist in ensuring students are college and career ready. The district lacks evidence to determine how data from the principal and teacher evaluation systems will be integrated into this system of data driven professional

development.

b. The district details how teachers will have a personalized growth plan that will match each educator with targeted professional development through their own Playbook system. Additionally, teacher/student data talks and principal/staff data talks will help identify areas of needed professional development for a staff member. Trainings will then occur in numerous ways: webcast, model curricula with matching accommodations, coaches. Evidence is provided to show how these trainings and accompanying data will aid educators in matching curricular resources to student need thus accelerating student progress. Documentation is also given to show Resource Coaches through the Community Schools project will assist in matching student need to community resources.

c. Details are provided to show how activities such as personalized professional development, job embedded coaching, online courses, district in person workshops, coaches and mentorships will aid educators in developing the skills necessary to structure effective learning environments to meet individual need and accelerate student progress to be college and career ready. Descriptions are also given to show that data reviews/analysis will be an ongoing part of these trainings and discussions to continuously refine the personalized environment. Although an extensive description of the teacher and principal evaluation systems are provided, it is unclear how data from this evaluation system will be integrated into this process.

d. Evidence is documented to show that by offering online courses to students, students will have increased access to effective and highly effective educators. These educators may be housed at other buildings but through the technology, students can now experience their teaching. Additionally, the district documents it's Growing Outstanding Leaders by Design initiative. Through this plan, targeted leadership training will occur thus creating an internal pipeline of effective administrators. The district also documents it's belief that through the personalized and targeted professional development described in this proposal, more educators will rate effective and highly effective.

Overall, the district provides evidence of many components of a high quality plan to increase the capacity of educators to improve instruction and implement personalized learning environments to ensure students are college and career ready. Extensive and targeted professional development plans are detailed as are data systems that will aid educators in matching need to resources. While the district documents it's principal and teacher evaluation system, it lacks detail to demonstrate how data from that system will be integrated into improving instruction. Additionally, timelines and responsible parties are missing from the district's proposal. Therefore, the district scores in the low area of the high range on indicator C(2).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a. The district states that the central office is structured to provide supports to schools but does not detail how it is structured. In another area of the application, however, the district describes how the Office of Innovation will monitor and provide support to the schools participating in the grant.
- b. Evidence is provided to document that membership in School Leadership Teams is mandated to include multiple stakeholders. These teams are provided autonomy in scheduling, building level decision making, flexibility in programming, and have an emphasis on shared leadership. These teams also have the authority to initiate changes in the school's program or focus.
- c. While the district states that it assesses students monthly, there is no evidence provided to show that students have the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery.
- d. In discussing the multiple ways students can demonstrate mastery of standards, the district details it's Capstone project and Dual Credit programs. However, these are not expressly connected to show how students demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways at multiple times.
- e. In other areas of this application, the district describes how the student Playbook will be fully adaptable and be able to provide accommodations to students who require them. In this section, the district details how it have human supports in place to support students with high needs including an ELL Welcome Center, specialists and community partners to provide supports.

Overall, the district provides evidence of sufficient school level autonomy to implement it's plan as well as the resources

and practices to ensure that resources and practices are adaptable to all students. However, the district provides limited evidence to demonstrate a supportive organization structure for the district office and fails to provide any evidence that students can earn credits based on mastery and that students can demonstrate that mastery in multiple methods at multiple times. Therefore, the district scores in the middle range on indicator D(1).

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

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a. The district details plans to provide access to all stakeholders. For parents who may not have access at home, the Community partnerships provide computer labs with extended hours to allow internet access to parents and students.

b. Specific responsible parties are named to spearhead the technical support structure necessary for all stakeholders. Students and parents have technical supports built into their school days. Parents will be provided a Parent Guide. Community computer labs will also be staffed with knowledgeable parties who can assist parents in accessing the online content and resources.

c & d. The district states that once the system upgrade is complete, it's data warehouses will be in an open format and all student data systems will be interoperable. Evidence is not presented to show that the district intends on making district data such as budget and human resources available in an interoperable format. Rather, it states that this type of information is available on it's website.

Overall, the district provides evidence of a plan to ensure equity in access for all stakeholders to required resources as well as sufficient technical support to utilize those tools. The district is currently in the process of upgrading it's data systems and states that it will make student data systems interoperable and in an open format but does not show evidence that it plans on doing so for district information. The district scores in the high range on indicator D(2).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district acknowledges that throughout the program, frequent monitoring and adjustments to the plan will be necessary. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that specific teams are in place to monitor progress towards goals and problem solve issues as they arise. These teams would also adjust tasks and examine the efficiency of the program. However, the district does not discuss how it plans to publicly share information related to the quality of investments resulting from the grant. Details are also vague in terms of timelines. The district scores in the high end of the middle range on indicator E(1).

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district states that it has already convened a district Transformation Team and that this team will develop a communication plan to include both internal and external stakeholders. Evidence is provided to demonstrate ways that communication will occur. Some of these methods include relaying information on a regular basis but others provide for 2 way communication amongst a variety of stakeholders including through call in shows on radio and TV as well as communicating via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. While the district does not currently have a high quality communication plan in place and a timeline is not given as to when it will be developed, evidence is provided to show that it to develop one when awarded the grant that will meet the requirements of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as shown by the list of ideas with timelines provided in the application. Thus the district scores in the high area on indicator E(2).

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides a detailed and thoughtful description of each performance measure, the rationale for selecting it, how the information will be utilized in relation to a personalized learning environment and monitoring reform goals, and how the measure will be reviewed and how it may shift/change over time.

All: Baseline and target data are presented for all participating students showing targeted increases in access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals. While the overall targets in the post grant year are still low in areas (only 60% of all participating students are anticipated to have an effective principal), the district provides an explanation as to how these measures are still evolving and not all data points are in place at this time.

4-8:

- College and Career Readiness: % of students who complete their Academic Success Plan. Goal is for all students in all subgroups to have 100% completion by post grant year. This is ambitious and achievable based on the plan presented by the district.
- Academic: Goals are presented in 2 areas: Increasing 8th grade Algebra I enrollment and Increase in number of students scoring at a certain level on Capstone projects. While reasonable targets are provided for each, these targets are not disaggregated by subgroup.
- Social-emotional: Increase in number of students participating in outside activity. Again, targets are reasonable but disaggregation by subgroup is not provided.

9-12:

- FAFSA: Targets are provided by school with increases annually that are reasonable. While subgroup data is not provided, the district addresses this by stating they have not disaggregated this data in the past but will from this point forward to be inline with the grant expectations.
- College and Career Readiness: Completing Academic Success Plan. Baselines and targets are provided with an overall goal to be at 100% of completion within 4 years. This is achievable with the implementation of the proposed plan.
- Career Indicator: Scores on ACT in Reading and Math. The district will monitor % of students achieving an 18 on Reading and 22 on Math. Baseline and targets for most groups are provided but no data is given for Economically Disadvantaged, ELL or IEP students. Targets do include annual increases for all subgroups however African American students are only projected to grow from 33% to 48% in Reading during the grant term. This does not close the achievement gap when compared to white students who are projected to be at 93% in the post grant year.
- Academic: Average GPA will be measured with a goal to increase all subgroups to at least a 2.15. This is achievable based on a personalized learning environment.
- Social-Emotional: Increase the number of students participating in an activity outside of the school day. Baseline data and annual targets included by subgroup with an increase to 100% in post grant years. This may be overly ambitious as some students have situations outside of the control of the school that may prevent them from being able to extend their school day.

Overall, the district provides ambitious yet achievable performance measures both overall and by subgroup. Rationales are provided as well as descriptions to demonstrate how these measures will be utilized in conjunction with the overall proposal to personalize the learning environment and how they will be reviewed and evaluated over time. The district is unable to provide data for some subgroups at this time but will improve data collection methods to do so in the future. Targets in certain areas do not aim to close the achievement gap. The district scores in the middle area on indicator E(3).

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

The district provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the grant activities. Evaluation indicators are provided for the student level, adult level, school level and district level. Responsible parties are identified as the Research and Evaluation Department. It is indicated that SMART goals will be developed as deliverables along with specific indicators and checkpoints. Monitoring will include interviews of participants as well as data collection and Instructional Rounds conducted in the schools and classrooms to monitor implementation. The district states that an evaluation of a project of this scale will require a multi-dimensional approach.

Overall, the district provides evidence of it's high quality plan to evaluate grant activities. SMART goals will be developed along with specific timelines for checkpoints. The department responsible for the coordination is identified and specific evaluative activities are detailed. The district is justified in believing this plan will result in accurate evaluation of the program along with actionable next steps. The district earns full points on indicator E(4).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget requested is \$23,862,029. The district states that it will need \$3,500,000 from other sources but fails to identify those sources or how much will come from each. Overall, the largest amount of the grant budget will go towards the supplies category (\$10,351,200) followed by just over \$5 million to equipment and \$5 million to personnel costs. In breaking out the project list, the majority of funding will go towards building the Playbook (just over \$10 million) followed by supporting personalized learning (approximately \$6.7 million). Included in the supplies category are the software licenses to support personalized learning.</p> <p>The budget presented by the district is reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal. While the district identifies the amount of money requested through the grant as well as the amount needed from other sources, it neglects to provide evidence of where these additional funds will come from and the total revenue from these sources is not provided. In the budget tables, the district delineates which expenses are one time and which are reoccurring. The district fails to address strategies the will ensure the long term sustainability of this program. Overall, the district scores in the high area of the medium range on indicator F(1).</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In order to maintain the focus on personalized learning after the term of the grant, the district provides a description of the methodology that will be employed to develop a strategic plan. This plan will involve outside partnerships to assist in continuing to provide services and resources to students and families following the term of the grant. Details are also provided to demonstrate that the district has conducted preliminary research to seek out additional funding sources through grants and in kind contributions. Evidence is provided of a high quality plan in the form of a list of activities that will occur during the 4 years of the grant to prepare for post grant years as well as a diagram depicting the district's Sustainable Financing Strategy.</p> <p>Overall, the district provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate a high quality plan and commitment to continuing personalized learning following the term of the grant. While funds have not yet been identified to finance projects in the 3 post-grant years and a budget has not yet been set, evidence has been presented to demonstrate that the district is conducting research to find appropriate revenue resources and will be prioritizing activities from the grant to continue in post grant years. Therefore, the district earns full points for indicator F(2).</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district proposes to deepen it's commitment to the Strive Partnership. This is an partnership of public and private organizations that provide cradle to career supports. Members include early learning leaders, superintendents, college presidents, funders, business leaders and service providers. This partnership allows for effective alignment of resources. 2. The district identifies 5 overall desired results: Kindergarten readiness, support inside and outside of school, students succeed academically, access to post-secondary education and entering a meaningful career. The last 4 of these align well with the grant proposal submitted by the district. 3. In discussing how it will track the selected indicators, the district does not refer back to the desired results. Rather, it discusses how resource coordinators at each site will utilize the data to identify the top students in need, match the with the appropriate resources, and monitor the results of the supports. In scaling up the model, the district aims to provide this model in all district high schools. Currently, the model is operational in 7 of the 12 high schools. In addressing improving results over time, the district points to an outside agency that did a study on the effectiveness of students participating in the model and the results demonstrating a positive correlation between participation and academic achievement. 4. The Community Learning Center model which is supported by the Strive Partnership will tailor services to match the needs of each community. However, examples of services offered include ESL classes for the whole family, tutoring as well as mental health services and routine medical care. This meets the requirement of integrating educational and other 		

services.

5. In describing how the partnership will build the capacity of staff, the acronym of REFORM is utilized. R reviews the data of each school partnership and sets goals, E engages in actions between the partnership and the school site. F focuses on specific needs from the review process. O offers supports to partners and parents. R resets when adjustments are needed. M measures both formally and informally. This process meets the criteria of assessing the needs, identifying those needs, decision making, engaging participants and assessing progress.

6. In outlining the performance measures associated with the Competitive Preference Priority, the desired results from earlier in this section are reiterated and 2 of the performance measures from E(3) are listed. However, these performance measures are not clearly linked to the desired results. One of these, participation in an outside activity, could be linked to this partnership. The other, completing an academic plan, is not linked as determined by the description and activities provided in the Competitive Preference Priority.

Overall, the district describes a coherent and sustainable partnership through Strive Partners which will support it's plan as described in Absolute Priority 1. Desired results that include both academic and family and community supports are provided, the majority of which also support the plan in Absolute Priority 1. Clear evidence is provided to show how this partnership will integrate educational and other services to support student achievement. A robust plan is provided to detail how the partnership will build the capacity of staff through the REFORM process as well as how this partnership will be scaled up to implementation in all high schools. However, the district and partnership fail to describe how they will track the desired results, use that to target resources and improve results over time. Additionally, ambitious and achievable performance measures linked to the partnership are lacking. Therefore, the district scores in the high area of the medium range on the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the district provides adequate evidence to demonstrate how it will coherently and comprehensively build on the 4 core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools and supports for students and educators. As the district transitions to Common Core State Standards, the learning environment will become more personalized and relevant for students as they are able to use data and software tools to identify their own areas of strength and weakness as well as their interests to set goals. These software tools will assist them in self-monitoring and aid them in identifying how their learning is preparing them for 21st Century Skills as well as self-monitoring to ensure they are on track to graduate College-and-Career Ready. By partnering with mentors in the community, student achievement can be accelerated and student learning deepened. Through the use of blended learning software called the Playbook and Capstone projects, the academic needs of all students will be met. Extensive professional development will be provided to educators which will result in increasing educator effectiveness, expanding access to the most effective teachers and decreasing the achievement gap. The district does demonstrate evidence of meeting the tenets of Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	155
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0101OH-3 for Cincinnati City School District



A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant establishes a comprehensive and coherent vision that is strong. • District will build its work in four educational assurance areas to expand AP classes is strong, create a data system that encourages students to make decisions in their own personalized learning plan is strong. • District will provide professional development and training opportunities for teachers for educators to become highly effective to improve student performance is strong and district will implement strategies at lowest performing schools using the community and family supports is strong. • District described a “playbook experience,” for students participating in personalized learning environments is comprehensive and strong. The application will link all of their educational experiences and career/academic assessments together into one location, ranging from an online advanced placement course to real time adaptive assessments. • Overall score is in high range in this criterion. 		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's approach to implementation is clear and strong. • District's plan will build on previous success in turning around lowest performing elementary schools through the Elementary Initiative, and will focus on reconfiguring structure to include 7-12 grade learners with an emphasis on district's lowest performing schools is strong. District will use restructured report card to improve efforts on district's average performing schools is strong. • District lists schools and total number of students to participate in plan is strong. Applicant provides descriptions and charts as evidence to support plan. • Overall, district score is in high range for this criterion. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant articulates a plan that supports reform and change and is high quality. • Applicant details several partnerships with local businesses, community leaders, parent groups, and students is strong. • Applicant details a strong plan to collaborate with the Strive Partnership, to focus on improving student achievement and growth, from kindergarten readiness to postsecondary completion that will be used district wide. • Plan details and uses a graph to show educational areas, inputs, activities, immediate outcomes and long term outcomes as evidence to support plan is strong. • Overall score is in high range in this criterion. 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided a graph to include its goals for improved student outcomes. 		

Plan outlines goals to increase student achievement, increase college and career readiness and increase graduation rates using outputs and outcomes that are strong.

- District will use the Ohio Academic Assessment to measure the performance on summative assessments is strong; however, the weakness is that for Math and Reading goals, the baseline goal starts low with yearly increases that appear to increase very high each year afterward.
- District mentions that it will work to decreasing achievement gaps. Weakness is that district does not specifically name what it will do nor the process to carry it out.
- Graduation rate goals are provided but are missing for certain subgroups American Indians and Hispanics.
- College enrollment goals are provided for all students in district.
- Overall goals are not ambitious and achievable because goal provided show an increase but significant ones.
- As a result, this sections ranks in the mid range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant demonstrates a clear track record of success. • Strong plan describes improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps by earning an effective rating on state report card, increasing student achievement in lowest performing elementary schools, being first district to use a teacher evaluation system that uses student growth and achievement to influence advancement and pay to account for 50% of teacher's evaluation, and implementing a Capstone project creating multimedia presentations of learning and developing an internal and external dashboard to make data available to students and educators in real time to inform instruction. • Overall district ranks in high range in this criterion. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District plan to increase transparency in processes, practices, and investments is reasonable; however, plan does not include tables or graphs. • District makes available to the public through the district StaffNet website and board minutes to include personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and non-personnel expenditures at the school level. • Overall score is in middle range for this criterion because applicant explains that this information is available but does not provide any supporting charts or graphs. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's evidence for state context for implementation is strong. • District's implementation for personalized learning aligns with the state's strategic direction for personalized learning. In addition, the district maintains it will follow all conditions required in the Ohio grant to successfully implement personalized learning environments as outlined in this plan. • Overall score in high range in this criterion. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's plan for stakeholder engagement and support is strong. 		

- Plan names district board, academic excellence committee, curriculum managers, principals, parents, federation of teachers and Strive Partnership as stakeholders engaged in development of proposal, but does not describe how they were selected, nor how the proposal was revised based on engagement and feedback.
- Letters of support accompany plan from department of education, mayor, regional chamber and a technical and community college is strong.
- Score in middle range for this criterion because applicant does not describe how stakeholders were selected for engagement and support.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's plan for improving learning is strong because personalized learning instruction describes students being at the center of their learning to create personal goals to include college and career experiences and service learning. • Plan describes student motivation being an aspect of success and how plan will incorporate goal setting, student choice and management of learning and high quality learning through real world experiences is strong. • Plan aligns its standards and graduation requirements to expectations of postsecondary education and real world employers is strong. • Students will use Playbook application to develop long range projects and students will use an academic portfolio strategy to choose from courses, learning environments, and career paths is strong. • Personalized instruction will place students at the center of their learning. They will set academic, career and personal goals that include college and career experiences and service learning and work site experience is strong. • Students will have high quality instructional approaches and environments by collaborating with family and school staff to utilize their personalized learning plans and Playbook for documenting and monitoring performance based progress toward meeting goals and achieving benchmarks is strong. • Ongoing and regular feedback is strong. Successful implementation will include routine student teacher conferences is strong. • Plan to accommodate high need students is strong. Skills and content will be learned through inquiry and application, and integration of technology resources will allow for more meaningful adaptations is strong. • Technology training named for students to ensure they understand how to use Playbook and other resources is named in plan; however, plan does not detail how training will be provided. • Applicant includes most elements of high quality plan, but was missing a timeline and responsible parties. • Overall, score in middle range in this criterion. 		

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

- Applicant's plan for teaching and leading is average because evidence in plan does not address how feedback from professional development of teachers will be used.
- Plan emphasizes educator training to measure student progress toward mastery, student goals and graduation, but does not address a timeline with responsible parties or benchmarks.
- Plan mentions it will improve practice using feedback, but there is no process in place.
- Plan names actionable information and high quality learning resources, but there is no process in place to carry it out.
- Applicant will gather individual and collective reflections from teachers to improve teaching and leading, but does not mention what it will do with this information. Applicant mentions its plan to provide students for college and career ready preparation is to implement professional development and resources for administrators to support teachers as they implement personalized learning plans and Playbook in classrooms is strong.
- Plan includes mechanisms in place for teaching and leading using district teacher evaluation plan is strong. Evaluation system includes following components: goal setting and professional growth plan, communication and professionalism, skills and knowledge and measures of student growth.
- There are mechanisms in place for teaching and leading; however, no follow-up plan included to support how

feedback from evaluating good teaching will be used.

- Plan implements an approach to support educators by implementing GOLD program to support student access to highly qualified educators.
- Plan does not mention how it will utilize feedback from educators to incorporate into professional development.
- Plan describes approach for increasing access to effective teachers and principals using a comprehensive educator evaluation system.
- Overall plan scores in middle range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- District's plan to support practices, policies and rules is weak.
- (a) Central office organization is not described in plan.
- (b) Plan to provide leadership teams with flexibility and autonomy is unreasonable because each team will consist of at least 12 members, which is too large to manage. Plan describes each school will have a leadership team; however, no mention of how each leadership team will operate at each school.
- (c-d) Plan only describes end of unit assessments, semester and or school year assessments as opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery is weak. Plan mentions capstone projects, and dual enrollment credit as ways students can demonstrate mastery at multiple times and comparable ways; however, plan does not address all targeted student population.
- (e) Plan describes an ELL Welcome Center for ELL students and families, but no mention of adaptability or accessibility.
- Overall score in middle range for this criterion.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for district infrastructure is weak because it is not clear how proposal for infrastructure will be managed.
- Applicant has developed an infrastructure to support personalized learning. The extent to how infrastructure will be effectively managed for a district of this size remains weak. Responsibilities at district level are clear, but it is not clear how schools will be supported in carrying out plans.
- Plan will involve technical support from different areas. Some of support systems have already been established while others have not.
- (a) Plan to ensure students, parents, educators and other stakeholders will have access to resources is weak. No mention as to how plan would be carried out.
- (b) Plan to ensure students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have technical support is weak. No mention as to how this would be implemented and carried out.
- (c) Plan to use technology systems in open format is weak. Plan mentions how students will have access to create personalized learning profiles and parents will be provided information in a training session, but no mention of how to carry it out.
- (d) Plan to use interoperable data systems is strong. Plan includes using a dashboard to share data openly with educators, parents, students, and community. Systems will include information form student achievement, student demographics, enrollment, discipline, afterschool and health/wellness.
- Overall score in middle range for this criterion.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for continuous improvement is credible because it provides specific details about it will gather information for continuous improvement.
- For example, the Ohio Improvement Process describes using district leadership, building leadership and teacher leadership to monitor progress and ensure tasks, actions and strategies are on course and on schedule in meeting set goals as measured by progress against indicators.
- Plan mentions using district leadership team, building leadership teams and teacher based teams to monitor progress and ensure tasks, actions and strategies are on course in meeting set goals, but plan lacks depth of description. No mention of how applicant will publicly share information on investments.
- All elements of high quality plan are included.
- Overall score in mid range in this criterion.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Plan describes ongoing communication and engagement is strong.
- District describes a transformation team to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure effective internal and external communication is strong. Communication protocols will be revised allowing for a seamless and transparent flow of information throughout district. It will also embed grant and Teacher Incentive Fund initiatives and promote two way communication with parents, students and community members.
- Overall plan is in high range in this criterion.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant provides a weak rationale to support for performance measures.
- For example, targets for 7-8 grade are very high at 100%, but no rationale to explain why these targets are so high.
- Weakness is applicant does not meet 12 to 14 performance measures, nor did it provide subgroup information.
- Weakness is applicant does not describe how measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative learning information in plan.
- Weakness is applicant does not detail how it will review and improve measures over time to gauge implementation progress.
- Overall, performance measures are ambitious and achievable, but some goals may be overly ambitious.
- Based on the lack of detail presented in this criterion, districts ranks in the low range.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has a plan to monitor and track all outcome components of grant funds.
- District's plan will provide formative data for ongoing decision making and summative information to inform district and community.
- Students, parents, school and district level indicators are included in table form.
- Program evaluation will be continuous and coordinated by district's research and evaluation department to identify SMART goals with specific indicators, data collection methods, regular monitoring checkpoints and status reports. Progress outcomes will be monitored to determine if adequate progress is being made toward objectives to find any discrepancies between what is was proposed and what is being implemented.
- Overall plan is high quality.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan to support budget for the project is reasonable.
- Applicant identifies external funding from other sources to support plan is reasonable.
- Budget is reasonable based on each component being itemized, such as, Program Administration, Professional Development, Building the Playbook, Supporting Personalized Learning, Expanding CLC Model, and Research and Evaluation.
- Applicant describes all funds to be used; however, applicant does not address strategies to ensure long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments.
- Applicant identifies funds used for one-time investments versus ongoing operational costs is reasonable.
- Overall score is in middle range for this criterion.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan to sustain project goals is strong.
- District describes a sustainable finance strategy. It emphasizes a close relationship with the Strive Partnership to identify new and sustaining resources for personalized learning district-wide, and to assist in the expansion and enhancement of community collaborations.
- Applicant identified funding from federal agencies, national grants, local, private and corporate funding. Applicant did not include estimated budget for three years after grant term ends.
- District maintains an effective plan for communication with key community and state stakeholders to share project milestones and achievements, rallying support of the district's strategic.
- Plan does not describe how applicant will evaluate effectiveness of past investments and use data to inform future investments.
- Overall plan scores in middle range in this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for competitive preference priority is strong.
- Applicant describes a partnership with Strive to focus on improving student achievement and growth, from kindergarten readiness rates through postsecondary completion rates. Services will include tutoring, after school, mentoring, health and wellness, college access, youth leadership, family engagement and other services.
- Applicant identified 5 Population desired results to include 1 early childhood education outcome, 2 family and community supports and 2 educational results.
- District described dashboard as the instrument to target students with low academic performance in need of interventions and to record partnership activity between agency and student, but no mention of how to track selected indicators that measure each result.
- District describes a strong process using REFORM, in which, Resource Coordinators engage a team of key stakeholders, including the Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC), in looking at community, school, and family data to identify areas where partnership programs can positively impact student achievement.
- Applicant describes strong plan to develop a strategy to use community partners and help parents engage their children to use the playbook to make data-informed decisions, explore college and/or career choice; promote healthy lifestyles; engage in service learning; and monitor academic progress.
- Applicant will use an independent evaluator to improve results over time is strong.
- Partnership will integrate Community Learning Centers to address clinics, eye centers, dental clinics, mental health counselors, tutoring programs and construction.
- Applicant describes one partnership with STRIVE and United Way to build tutoring capacity in elementary Community Learning Centers by joining district in launching the "Be The Change" campaign across the city.
- Applicant describes plan for resource coordinator to review data at each school and community and establish partnership that supports achievement, addresses the holistic needs of students, and motivates community stakeholders to share accountability.
- Applicant does not address a decision making plan process and infrastructure nor involves parents in that process.

- Applicant describes a weak plan to assess progress in plan.
- Plan has identified achievable performance measures is strong.
- Overall score in middle range in this criterion.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan to meet absolute priority is reasonable.
- Plan names that it will accelerate student achievement, increase effectiveness of educators, and increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. However, plan provides minimal evidence to support learning and teaching.
- Applicant provides a plan to support technology and describes how partnerships will augment resources by providing support to address social, emotional, or behavioral needs of participating students.
- Plan provided minimal evidence to demonstrate how personalized learning environments will close achievement gaps.

Total	210	141
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