



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0113IN-1 for Gary Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC) articulates a complete and coherent reform vision of raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap among subgroups by increasing academic equity, which in turn will increase high school graduation rates and ensure that their students are college ready when they enter the postsecondary educational world and/or global marketplace.

(a)

The school district addresses three of the four core educational assurance areas.

- To underscore its commitment to recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers, GCSC's plan includes developing a partnership with Indiana University that fosters mentorship between student and veteran teachers; eliminating emergency certification; and cosponsoring housing initiatives that will increase teacher residency and homeownership in the area.
- A data system which allows continuous feedback is currently in place and allows district and school level administrators and teachers to access student data including demographics, attendance, discipline, enrollment, and academic performance. Plans to increase the capacity for this systems are also mentioned. The applicant seeks to enhance this practice for program purposes.
- GCSC has adopted rigorous state and national standards to prepare students for college and/or careers such as Indiana Common Core Standards (INCC) and the IAS (Indiana Academic Standards).

(b)

The applicant's proposed approach to its goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks is outlined. Opportunities for such activities will begin in the primary grades where students will begin to explore their interests through digital and traditional scavenger hunts and continue through high school where students will be given the ample time to create their own learning experiences. The approach is sound.

(c)

The applicant offers a complete description of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. Students and teachers will use a digital curriculum to provide an experience tailored to each student. The applicant paints an effective picture of how this will look at each level of education (elementary, middle, high school). For example, students in kindergarten will begin to explore their interests through digital and traditional scavenger hunts. While students in the primary grades will produce multi-media projects and middle school students will begin setting postsecondary goals.

GCSC however, fails to show how it has turned around its lowest achieving schools--the remaining core assurance area. The applicant admits that the new school improvement plan has not worked and that it will attempt to correct the situation with activities outlined in the grant. This information causes some concern as it places the applicant's ability to increase student performance.

Overall, this places GCSC in the bottom of the high range. While the overarching vision was strong, the applicant failed to show how it has turned around low-performing schools in the past.

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

The applicant explains that schools chosen to participate in the reform are the most economically depressed area of the city. The seven chosen schools comprise the district's "Turn Around Empowerment Zone. The applicant also notes that the student population at each school exceeds the minimum requirements for low income families (based on free and reduced lunch statistics).

However, the information the applicant supplies for the schools that will participate is conflicting.

- In the narrative, the applicant states that seven schools (Beveridge Elementary, Brunswick Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, West Side Leadership Academy, Lew Wallace STEM Academy, Watson Academy for Boys, and Dunbar-Pulaski Academic and Career Academy.) will participate in the program (No total number of participating students or educators is offered.)
- The applicant also provides a table (not labeled) of 11 participating schools (Bailly Preparatory Academy, Beveridge Elementary, Brunswick Elementary, Dunbar-Pulaski Academic and Career Academy, Jacques Marquette Elem, Jefferson Elementary, Webster Elementary, West Side Leadership Academy, Lew Wallace STEM Academy, Watson Academy for Boys, Williams Elementary) and no total number of participating students or educators.
- While another table lists four participating schools (Westside, Beveridge, Brunswick, and Jefferson), 3,753 participating students, and 196 participating educators.

Because an accurate count of schools, participating students who are high need, and participating educators cannot be determined, the applicant scores in the low range of the criterion.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

With the information provided in its narrative, the ability for the district to effect widespread change through the proposed targeted professional development, personalized learning plans, and planned technological improvements is possible. The use of a standard digital curriculum will aid in all facets of this. In addition to the digital curriculum the applicant plans to develop strong partnerships in order to empower school-wide improvements, targeted professional development, integrate state-of-the-art technology, personalized learning plans, and strategic after-school interventions that can be scaled up district wide.

However, it is unclear how many schools are to participate in the proposed activities, therefore it is difficult to determine whether the proposed program can be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

Seeing that the effectiveness and quality cannot be determined without additional information, the applicant scores in the middle range.

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

GCSC offers several tables that outline its annual goals, including those for most subgroups.

Where possible, the applicant offers data that shows that while the achievement gap is somewhat large student gains will be made. For example, the applicant proposed to make a 45% gain in the Grade 7 ELA achievement gap for African-American males.

The applicant also outlines the measures that the district plans to take that will decrease double-digit numbers to single-digit differences such as implementing a digital curriculum.

However, the ELA-wide goals are not completely clear and some information is missing, such as

- The graduation rate for students identified as economically disadvantaged for SY 16-17
- Students with Disabilities information for a majority goals has been suppressed while SPED information has been provided for others
- Jefferson's ELA goals for Grades 4, 5, and 6
- College enrollment and postsecondary degree attainment

The applicant states that 10% gains are to be achieved on surveys each year. How this relates to improved student learning is unclear. Additional information is needed on the relevancy of the survey.

Overall, without the missing information, the ambitiousness and achievability of the program goals cannot be determined. Because of this, the applicant scores in the middle 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	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In the narrative, the applicant offers a list of successful partnerships and achievements and a few examples of programs and services that, in the past four years, have advanced student learning and achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Banneker Achievement Center focuses on elementary students who are tested for entry into its challenging and rigorous curriculum. Participants in this program have increased state assessment scores and program graduates go on to enroll in the district's Secondary Honors program (a high school program). • Some schools across the district currently implement Family Night Math, a program that bridges the divide between the ways in which parents were taught math concepts and the way math is currently being taught. The district boasts an average 10% improvement on classroom evaluations. (Although the applicant mentions the success of Family Night Math, later in the narrative, the applicant states that the program has not been implemented. The reported dropout rate of 10.1% is also confusing.) • Graduation rates have risen by 15.6% since SY 2006-2007. <p>Under the proposed program, the applicant will make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in an effort to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services through an open-door policy and the availability of its database system.</p> <p>Yet even with these efforts, the applicant has not effectively demonstrated its historical record of improving student learning outcomes. For example, though graduation rates have improved, the applicant does not outline how that change came about. It is difficult for the reviewer to see these partnerships as advancing student outcomes versus extracurricular activities. Additionally, it is unclear whether the applicant accounts for the Family Night Math drop out rate in its final 10% improvement rate.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant fails to detail how it has achieved ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its low-performing schools, nor was any information about college enrollment rates offered. Because of this, the applicant scores in the middle range for this criterion.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a general statement of transparency. The district discloses district and school non-personnel expenditures at board meetings and in the local newspapers and salary schedules for all personnel categories which have also been made public are available in district human resource documents. However, the applicant fails to mention how interested parties may obtain this information if they do not have access to meetings and newspapers. For example, it would have been helpful to know if this information is available on the district website, and whether RttT- D program information will be made available separately (including grant-related positions). Because of this, the applicant scores in the middle range.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It is unclear whether the applicant has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. For example, the applicant proposes a 1:1 Technology Initiative to Increase Capacity and Equity. This initiative will ensure a 1:1 ratio of students to computers and allow students to retrieve information electronically at school and away from school. As a result of this technology, the materials available to students will support students in building executive function and taking ownership over their learning. Students will be able to track their progress and view their overall progress. Students</p>		

can also keep track of the software segments and independent reading books they have completed, as well as monitor their time on the software, providing them with planning and time management skills.

The applicant mentions a governing board, as well as the state, changing the definition of a textbook, but these offerings are insufficient to determine whether the district has the authority to implement alternative learning environments (if the digital-based personal learning curriculum proves ineffective) without lengthy discussions and preapproval from the appropriate authorities.

The jump from changing the definition of a textbook to creating a technology-based curriculum requires a level of autonomy that can be evidenced by state policies or a letter of support. Because of the lack of evidence, the applicant scores in the low range.

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

15

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to detail how it sufficiently engaged students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools in the development of the proposal other than occasional surveys. The applicant does provide letters of support for the proposal, however, the letters are from entities not mentioned (nor do they come from students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools) in the narrative and the level of support cannot be gauged. The letters support the overarching goals of the initiative, but they do not state in what ways they will support the initiative so that change will come about, but there is no other evidence to support a majority teacher buy-in.

In addition to the above mentioned concerns, the failure to engage stakeholders at the beginning of the process decreases the likelihood of enthusiastic participation later and compromises the ability to gather data that reflects the entire before, during, and after grant process. For example, a stakeholder could have helped to make revisions early in the process that would have increased long and short term student achievement, but without that input the applicant would never know. Because of this, the applicant scores in the low range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has outlined a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. These actions will provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participants that enable these students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to national and state standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. For example,

- The first steps in creating a personalized learning environment will begin in early elementary grades. Students in kindergartens will explore their interests through digital and traditional scavenger hunts. This will lay the groundwork for learning to collect and explain facts and anecdotes pertaining to personal interests.
- Beginning in the primary grades, students will be taught the fundamentals of traditional and digital research to learn more on topics and lessons they design and choose based on their own interests and learning goals. According to the applicant, the student, not the teacher, will drive the learning.
- As students progress to intermediate and middle grades, the personalized learning environment becomes more student centered. The applicant envisions a full approach to personalized learning that merges differentiation and individualization, but is centered on the learner in order to match his/her specific interests and experiences.

Additionally, students will have the opportunity to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving through the progress monitoring of data provided by the Acuity and SunGard assessments. This ongoing formative assessment will enable us to provide personalized learning that meets the student where he/she is and accelerates growth while focusing on students' interests and educational goals. At the elementary level, students with high needs, demonstrated by progress monitoring assessments, will be served in the after school tutoring programs and Saturday Academies proposed in this grant. And though this addresses some of the needs of students, it is unclear what interventions will be in place for primary students.

Overall, the applicant has much work to do. A timeline for implementation of the four-year project is offered, but it appears to be too general. More specifics are need about team composition, proposed vendors, and the overall structure of the

program. For example, teachers will be trained and supported on the new tools, but the applicant fails to state who will train the students. Because of this, the applicant scores in the middle range.

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

20

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant offers a vague plan for its proposed approach to implement instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs.

- In regards to training, the applicant hopes to hire experts to provide professional development and training, but no vendors or consultants have been identified.
- Throughout the plan, the applicant states that teacher and instructional/organization leaders will be given the opportunity to access and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress. The tools and processes are high quality and will match student needs with specific resources and approaches which will provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources.

Overall, the plan offers general ideas, but does not provide sufficient detail. For example, the applicant states that teachers will be evaluated annually but a sample of the evaluation system has not been included. Nor does the applicant give any indication of how teachers will be given the opportunity to improve their skills, other than through the assistance of an instructional coach. Also, the plan does not fully address the need for effective and highly effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools, STEM subjects, and/or specialty areas.

The Applicant scores in the middle range for this criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details some practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

(a)

The applicant states that the district office supports administrators, teachers, and coaches in the school. However, a detailed structure is not offered and this lack of detail causes the reviewer to question the applicant's ability to implement the vision outlined in section A, and its ability to deliver on the plans it describes in section C.

(b)

Leadership teams have been established; however, the information provided is insufficient to determine whether there is sufficient flexibility and autonomy to control such factors as learning strategies and modes of instruction.

(c-d)

Credit recovery and dual credit programs give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Students will also have the opportunity to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving through the progress monitoring of data provided by the Acuity and SunGard assessments. And the model, Key Principles of Personalized Learning, upon which the proposed program is structured, will give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways once it is implemented.

(e)

The digital curriculum will provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. The 1:1 Technology Initiative to Increase Capacity and Equity will provide these resources and allow educators to personalize instruction.

However, because the applicant omits this section in the proposal, it is difficult for the reviewer to determine whether a high-quality plan exists. The reviewer considered many of the items in other parts of the application, but much of the information was not clearly spelled out. For example, the applicant does not provide specific policies and rules. Nor does the applicant provide details about how it will address English Language Learners. Because of this, the applicant places in the middle range for this criterion.

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

10

3

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it will support program's infrastructure in various ways.

(a)

Through the use of wireless internet cards and laptops, the applicant will ensure that all participating students, parents, and educators, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. With the high rate of poverty in the Empowerment Zone, the applicant is aware that students do not have equity with regard to Internet access and therefore hopes to bridge the gap with its 1:1 Technology Initiative, a plan to provide students with a laptop and a wireless internet card 24/7. Teachers will also have the same access. However, the applicant does not include information about how other stakeholders will access this information--which limits the capacity for total engagement.

(b)

Students will receive technical support from school-based staff, more specifically, their teachers. The applicant states that their first step in implementing training is to provide ongoing professional development for teacher. Yet, no specifics beyond this are given. Providing a personalized learning experience for each student is one of the applicant's goals. More specifically, the applicant plans to use resources and create systems that revolve around technology, therefore the training of students is paramount. Without this information, it is difficult to assess whether this portion of the application is high quality. Nor does the applicant address how stakeholders other than parents, educators, and teachers will have appropriate levels of technical support.

(c)

The district allows parents and students to access to information technology systems and to export their information in an open data format. The district has placed systems onsite at schools so that parents may access this information if they do not have wireless access at home. However, more information is needed about how parents will be trained. It is not clear whether they will receive training during access hours or at another time. This information is critical when evaluating this section. Because parents are an important part of the process, this information should be more specific.

(d)

The applicant states that it is currently using an interoperable data system that allows a teacher-student match that ensures a continuous loop of feedback, exchanged data is analyzed and converted into actionable information. At both the district and school level, administrators and teachers are able to readily access student data regarding demographics, attendance, discipline, enrollment, and performance. The data matches the student to teacher of record by course and grade level which will allow a meaningful connection to be made between teacher effectiveness, professional development needs, and student performance. Instructional leaders will receive guidance on how data is collected and used at district, school, classroom, and individual student levels' Additionally, the applicant plans to make overarching technological upgrades receipt of grant funds, but no specifics as to what the upgrades will be was not offered. Overall, the applicant does not offer a high-quality plan.

Overall, the applicant scores in the middle range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
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(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it will use checklists and surveys for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant

For example,

- GCSC will develop a checklist to evaluate non-cognitive, social/personal performance measures of students in grades K-3. This will include oral surveys and behavioral reports, as well as information gathered from annual health screenings. A point value will be assessed to determine overall positive, mild concern, and significant concern values.
- Professional development activities will be assessed for rigor and relevance. 85% mastery on all assessments will be required.
- Teachers, School Leadership Teams, and the District Leadership Team for RTTT-D will annually evaluate the effectiveness of outside partners for school improvement.
- Stakeholder surveys will be distributed to parents, municipal leaders, partners, and other members of the community annually to evaluate the impact of the reform.
- The Gary Community School Corporation Board of Trustees will evaluate the progress of the reform annually.

However it is unclear whether the teachers and students will receive this checklist so that they can gauge their own performances.

The applicant's strategy also does not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, nor does it state which tools the school-based team will use to evaluate the effectiveness of outside partners.

Overall, the applicant does not offer a high-quality plan as it is not known exactly what the applicant will evaluate as the proposed plan offered few details. For this criterion, the applicant scores in the low range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it will use surveys and meetings as the primary means for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Yet, there is no information as to how these surveys will be administered and the data analyzed. Also in its narrative, the applicant fails to offer a complete plan, processes for evaluation, and key details about the evaluation. For example, the applicant states that it "Teachers, school leadership teams, and the district leadership team for RTTT-D will annually evaluate the effectiveness of outside partners for school improvement," yet the applicant does not offer any further details about how it will do this.

The applicant fails to offer a high-quality plan and because of this, scores in the low range for the criterion.

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

In providing a table of approximately 14 performance measures, the applicant outlines an ambitious yet achievable list of goals which features annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant 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 through the use of surveys and checklists.

For example:

- The percentage of students passing Algebra end of course assessments will increase by 10% annually for all sub-groups.
- The percentage of students passing end of course assessments in English will increase by 10% annually for all subgroups.
- K-3 student's scores on the Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) will increase by a minimum of 10% annually.

- Student scores on surveys will increase in overall positive rating by 10% annually.

However, the applicant does not describe its rationale for selecting that measure nor does the applicant state how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to monitor the implementation progress. It is also important to note that some of the information on the performance measures has been redacted. For example: The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal are a highly effective teacher. This information speaks to one of the core assurance areas and the overall vision of the program. Because the information is missing, the reviewer is unable to make a clear determination about the quality of the plan.

Overall, the applicant scores in the middle range for this criterion.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the school-based leadership team and the Board of Trustees will use surveys as a means to determine the program's overall effectiveness and will administer these tools on an annual basis. However, the applicant fails to provide details of how this will be done. No examples of surveys or detailed descriptions of the process are provided to determine the level of rigor and appropriateness of the surveys. Nor has a high-quality and detailed plan of the program been offered to determine whether it will be effective.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a comprehensive budget that is reasonable and sufficient to support the project for the duration of the grant. It appears that all funds to support the project will come from Race to the Top grant. The applicant will incorporate Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A, IDEA (special education) to supplement its budget request.

The budget covers all critical areas of the proposed program such as supporting teacher development through increased professional development and professional learning communities. And with the help of guaranteed additional funds such as state appropriations, the costs of the program will be more than covered, if the requested amount matches the number of students that should be served.

The applicant also provides thoughtful rationale for its expenditures. The narrative states that all costs associated with this grant were based on careful review of quality, research based programs along with average prices available through sample quotes and internet searches. In addition, current successful programs used in the district were analyzed for their effectiveness when considering technology tools, instructional materials, and professional development. Local universities, the Mayor's Cabinet, the school community and Community Collaborative partners were also consulted regarding program purchases for this grant.

Furthermore, the applicant identifies the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period. It is important to note that a few of the identified one-time investments such as salaries for instructional coaches, substitute teachers, and the curriculum director as well as community engagement should be sustained past the program's initial four-year period to ensure effective teaching as well as continuous stakeholder engagement.

However, the reviewer is confused about the overall requested amount as the proposed budget does not fall within the appropriate range. Throughout the narrative, more specifically in section A, the applicant has failed to provide sufficient evidence about the number of program participants.

The applicant scores in the low range for this criterion.

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

The applicant states that it will practice flexibility in the use of funds to sustain the program and search for grants and other sources of funding. However, this plan is not high-quality as the applicant fails to detail how this process will occur and from what sources it will seek funding. Moreover, it is unclear what 'practice flexibility of funds' means when money should be allocated for specific purposes.

Lastly, the applicant does not mention how it will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

Overall, much more detail is needed for this section, because of this, the applicant scores in the low range for this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant address the Competitive Preference Priority.

(1) The applicant has sought partnerships to enhance the applicant's goal of teaching the whole child. For example,

- GCSC has developed a district-wide safe schools task force to address any safety concerns that parents, students, staff, or concerned citizens may have. Safe school forums are held in every school building as well as on the district level. Partnerships with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana and Indiana University Northwest will keep students safe by providing after school and summer programs for youth ages 6 to 18 with a strong focus on mentoring programs, education, and parent participation.
- The Gary Police Department provides a program called Project Rebuild to combat issues such as truancy. The West Side High School Leadership Accord Program manages the four-year DOORS program (Developing Options Opportunities for Responsible Students), which provides 9th-12th grade students with mentoring, employment opportunities, college scholarships, and medical/social-emotional resources.
- GCSC currently partners with Communities that Care, a coalition-based community prevention operating system that uses a public health approach to prevent youth problem behaviors. The Communities That Care (CTC) system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school and violence.

(2) Population-level desired results

The applicant will use data from the CTC Youth Survey, district discipline records, community partners, student achievement data, and the student survey to track desired results. Seven population-desired results for students in the district were identified such as the applicant's desire to decrease in the number of grades K-12 expulsions by 15% by SY 2017-18 as measured by school discipline records between August and May of each school year. The results focus both on academic and personal growth. The population groups include all identified students as well as parents.

(3) Track the selected indicators

The applicant will use a survey method to determine the non-cognitive progress of students in grades 4-12. These surveys will serve as valuable indicators of the students' social/personal progress toward college and career goals. Students respond to a number of statements about their perceptions of their school, as well as school related self-perceptions. The surveys will provide a research-based framework that enables educators and students to decide which practices, policies, norms, and customs support student success and which hinder that effort. The surveys allow for the collection and sharing of best practices. The will provide a valuable method to assess the performance of this initiative. GCSC will develop a checklist to evaluate non-cognitive, social/personal performance measures of students in grades k-3. This will include oral surveys and behavioral reports, as well as information gathered from annual health screenings. A point value will be assessed to determine overall positive, mild concern, and significant concern values.

Although the applicant states that it is a a priority for the youth of Gary is to feel safe in school, in the community, and at home, it does not outline any strategies to scale the model beyond the participating schools.

(4) How the partnership will integrate education and other services

School counselors will provide additional social/emotional health resources as needed, coordinating with partners such as Communities that Care. Partners will provide mentors, trainings and tutors as needed also. Schools across the district are holding Family Math Nights to bridge the divide between the ways in which the parents were taught mathematics concepts and the way math is currently being taught. Yet it is important to note that the narrative includes conflicting information about Family Math Nights. It is not clear whether or not it is being implemented.

(5) How the partnership and GCSC will build capacity of staff

The plan to build the capacity of staff is unclear. Though many statistics have been offered, it is difficult to determine their relevancy to the project.

Overall, the applicant's plan has many favorable qualities such as creating partnerships with established organizations like the Police Department and Communities that Care; however, many items that would strengthen this section are missing. For example, the applicant fails to provide letters of support indicating a proposed or previous partnership, nor does the applicant clearly explain the current status of Family Math Nights. Additionally, because the applicant stresses the its partnership with the police so strongly, the plan does not include how the safety measures that will be undertaken at the participating schools will be translated into community and home safety, nor does it include how the partnership will build the capacity of staff.

Tthe applicant scores in the middle range for this criterion.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant effectively meets this priority. The narrative is coherent and addresses how it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on the core educational assurance areas in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers, GCSC's plan includes developing a partnership with Indiana University that fosters mentorship between student and veteran teachers; eliminating emergency certification; and cosponsoring housing initiatives that will increase teacher residency and homeownership in the area, ◦ implementing a data system which allows continuous feedback is currently in place and allows district and school level administrators and teachers to access student data including demographics, attendance, discipline, enrollment, and academic performance, ◦ and adopting rigorous state and national standards to prepare students for college and/or careers such as Indiana Common Core Standards (INCC) and the IAS (Indiana Academic Standards). • accelerate student achievement, decrease the achievement gap, and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student by implementing a digital curriculum to create personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and allowing students to progress at their own pace, and • increase the effectiveness of educators by improving their teaching methods and student performance through rigorous professional development, • increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers by offering credit recovery and dual-credit programs. <p>Overall, the applicant offers a good foundation for a great program. Many specifics are missing such as subgroup data for some performance measures and how students and parents will be continuously engaged. Including these items would make for a stronger application.</p>		
Total	210	73



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0113IN-2 for Gary Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The projection for full implementation of College and Career Ready Standards in grades 3-12 is school year 2015-16.</p> <p>Partnerships have been formed with the City of Gary and the University of Indiana to assist and retaining high quality staff.</p> <p>To retain novice teachers a monetary incentive and an affordable housing initiative is being planned in coordination with the Mayor's Office, Department of Building & Codes and the Gary School District Career Vocational</p> <p>To ensure that teachers of the highest quality are serving students, the Charlotte Danielson model of teacher evaluation is used. GCSC is currently developing and evaluation model for administrators.</p> <p>A robust data system is in place in Gary secondary schools.</p> <p>2012 Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) data shows GCSC eighth grade passing scores on English and Language Arts (ELA) and Math to be the lowest in the state. GCSC is committed to deep reform in the district and state's lowest performing schools by using a comprehensive plan and a powerful school-wide improvement model.</p> <p>The applicant has not described what the classroom experiences will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments other than to state that "a culture of high expectations/no excuses for students and teachers and will allow for increased teacher effectiveness by examining the level of rigor and relevance in each classroom."</p> <p>The applicant has articulated a great need for reform in a very depressed area. The core assurances have been addressed and that there will be incentives and training for teachers. A description of the classroom experience for students was not provided. School-wide improvement methods were discussed in general terms. The applicant has not adequately articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision to provide a clear and credible approach to accelerate student achievement to meet the goals of the RttT-D initiative. This section is rated in the mid-range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The seven schools chosen to participate in this reform are in the most economically depressed area of the City of Gary and comprise the district's "Turn Around Empowerment Zone." No other explanation is provided for the selection of schools to be served.</p> <p>A list of eleven schools that will participate in grant activities is provided with the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches. The total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators is provided for four of these schools. Projected achievement for all students and subgroups (SpEd suppressed) is provided for two schools. A chart for decreasing achievement gaps by subgroup is provided for grades 7,8, and 10 is but the meaning of this data is unclear.</p> <p>The applicant has not provided all of the required information. The description of how schools will be selected and which schools will be served is not clearly stated. The required data for the total number of participating students is incomplete. How the schools will participate in grant activities is not clearly articulated..</p> <p>This section is rated in the low range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant plans to provide LEA-wide reform and change through the use of technology.

The district seeks assistance to improve technology in the Empowerment Zones with a 1:1 ratio of laptops to students. Embedded technological professional development will assure that teachers become proficient in teaching 21st century skills and are highly effective facilitators of personalized learning at all levels in all grades included in this initiative.

This will provide an "opportunity for impoverished schools to become technologically equipped and students to become technologically proficient to achieve equity in an area where students have the most significant needs." They plan to do this through strong partnerships to empower school-wide improvements, targeted professional development, integrated state-of-the-art technology, personalized learning plans, and strategic after-school interventions.

Resources, trainers, and other improvement components have not been named in this section or in other sections of the application. Goals and some activities have been listed but deliverables, timelines, and people/positions for oversight have not been provided. Most schools to be served are elementary schools and some mention of scaling up to other schools and to the upper grades was mention but not detailed. There is insufficient detail provided to determine whether the applicant's plan will lead to the realization of outcome goals set by the applicant. It is not clearly presented how these schools will showcase their improvement to schools in other districts..

The applicant has provided some activities that would result in change at the participating schools; however, activities are not specific and do not include the details required for a high-quality plan. Evidence to describe a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools can not be determined based on the description provided.

This section is rated in the low range.

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

10

2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's goals for improved student outcomes were not clear because data to determine improved student learning and performance and increased equity were missing or unclear.

- Demographic data was provided for four schools; Beverly Elementary, Brunswick Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, and Westside High School.
- Performance data was provided on the ISTEP for Beverly Elementary and Brunswick Elementary.
- Data for decreasing the achievement gap was provided for comparison and subgroups. No description to clarify this data was provided so its meaning is unclear. Data for some groups was missing.
- Data on graduation rates for 2012-13 for Black/African American, Economically Disadvantaged, and SPED were provided. The chart did not provide information on whether this was for the whole district or specific high schools.
- The projected graduation rate for the next four years was projected.
- College enrollment rates were not addressed.

Insufficient data was provided to determine whether the applicant's vision would result in student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable goals. The data was incomplete and poorly organized. No narrative was provided to enhance the meaning of the data that was provided. This section is rated in the low scoring 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	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant listed a number of activities to demonstrate a track record of success. These include the development of a strategic plan developed with input from its stakeholders including parents, teachers, administrators, staff, school board members, community leaders, and retirees. This was designated as a comprehensive and effective plan that was to be implemented through 2009. Activities include coordination with business and community members. No student success data was reported in charts or graphs, raw student data, or other evidence. They did report that graduation rates have risen since 2007-08 by 16.5%. The 2011-12 graduation rate was 66.8%. Dropout rates have decreased and the 2011-12 dropout rate was 10.1%.

The applicant did not provide sufficient data to demonstrate a record of success in the past four years. There is a section included (B5) to describe the achievement in the district in the empowerment zone as compared with the rest of the state of Indiana "is alarming".

Reforms listed are not tied specifically to the persistently lowest-achieving schools. No mention of making student performance data available to students, educators or parents is provided. This section is rated in the low range.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCSC makes all district and school budgets public annually at board meetings. Budgets are and school expenditures are published the in the local newspapers annually. Published budget documents include all salaries and expenditures for each school in the district.

The district maintains and adheres to salary schedules for all personnel categories which have also been made public in district human resources documents. The applicant does not specify that actual personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures are available.

There is evidence that the applicant makes this information transparent; however, there is insufficient detail to deem that it is highly-transparent. The section is rated in the mid range.

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

10

3

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The response in this area referenced a November 2009 State Board of Education change in the definition of textbooks to include digital content and the devices necessary to deliver the content.

Since the reform proposed relies on technology, this change in definition would support the applicant's implementation.

The Indiana Department of Education encourages school districts to transition from traditional textbooks to digital textbooks and curriculum. Digital textbooks and curriculum are less expensive (often free) and more current than traditional textbooks. A digital textbook can be updated at any time, while the content of a traditional textbook is stagnant for six years. College and Career Ready Standards are set for review and revision every three years.

No other State legal, statutory or regulatory requirement to implement personalized learning environments were described in the applicant's proposal. This section is rated in the low-range.

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

15

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Stakeholder engagement and support provided for the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal included:

- The applicant provided some detail of how stakeholders were involved in section A; however, there is no evidence of how support for this proposal was developed.
- There is no mention of evidence of direct teacher engagement and support from teachers though a collective bargaining representation or through support from 70% of teachers.
- Letters of support were included from the mayor, state senator and representative, Valparaiso University, and the Urban League of Northwest Indiana.
- The Indiana Department of Education did not comment on the plan because less than 10 days were provided for comment.

The only evidence of stakeholder engagement and support was through these letters. No evidence such as notices of meetings, agendas, minutes, or sign in sheets was provided.

The applicant did not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. This section is rated in the low scoring range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a four year plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order for all students to graduate college-and career-ready. To do this, district and school committees will be formed and each of the seven schools will develop a strategic plan. Goals for these plans include teacher and administrator understanding for the implementation of College and Career Ready Standards, creating rigorous and relevant learning environments, applying rigorous and relevant instructional strategies, unpacking and designing next generation assessments, using data to inform instruction. The district cites successful programs in the United Kingdom, Indiana, and North Carolina that can be used to inform their process. The GCSC grant planning committee sees a critical role for a provider of research-based quality school improvement to assist in the implementation of a reform program. The role of the provider would include assistance to district staff so that they could take over the process in the second through the fourth years of implementation.

The goal is for students to become more self-directed learners with lessons and activities that empower them to make choices and apply what they learn to their individual goals for future success. This will be accomplished by updating the technological infrastructure in the targeted schools.

Empowerment schools already make it a regular practice to reach out to parents through phone calls, conferences and in-home visits. GCSC realizes that students must be trained and supported in using all new tools and applications to be able to access their learning. The student information system already in place allows teachers, administrators, and parents to have timely updates on student performance.

The description of the plan does not meet the requirements of a high quality plan. Goals have been identified and some activities are listed. Timelines, deliverables are not defined. Those responsible to oversee the plan are named only as the committee. There is no discussion of strengthening parental support. Personalized learning recommendations are given in very general terms. The applicant acknowledges the number of high need students and that prior reforms have been ineffective; however, accommodations and high-quality strategies are not specified. No mechanisms were provided to train and support students' understanding of how to use tools and resources.

The applicant did not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate that all students would be prepared to graduate college-and career ready. This section is scored in the low range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes the implementation of a new model of school improvement, funded by this grant, "provided by experts in the field, teachers in the seven selected participating schools will be provided with on-going, on-site professional development to enable them to expand their collective and individual capacity to include the ability to adapt content and instruction to include many of the core components of personalized learning. . ."

Key principles of the Personalized Learning Plan are:

Assessment for learning and the use of evidence and dialog to identify every pupil's learning needs and topic mastery;

Teaching and learning strategies that develop the competence and confidence of every learner by actively engaging and academically stretching them;

Curriculum entitlement and choice that delivers breadth of study, personal relevance and flexible learning pathways through the system;

A student-centered approach to school organization, with school leaders and teachers thinking creatively about how to support high quality teaching and learning; and

Strong partnerships beyond the school to drive forward progress in the classroom, to remove barriers to learning and to support pupil well-being.

There are no specifics provided on how support for the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready will be provided.

There are no specifics proved on how content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches will be adapted.

There are no specifics on how frequent measures of student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress will be done.

There are no specifics on how participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

There is no actionable information that would help educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests.

There are no specific high-quality learning resources identified including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and the tools to create and share new resources.

There are no specific processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

Some mention of teacher incentive to teach and stay in the empowerment zones was presented in section A. This included making housing available that had been redone by student programs at the district.

Teacher evaluation plans are assessed annually. Principal evaluation is based on a number of criteria. No detail is provided regarding the findings of these evaluations and how it is linked to continuous school improvement.

There is no specific information on how the district's teacher evaluation system will help school leaders and school leadership teams take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness or school culture and climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

There are no specific training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

The applicant has not provided a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support needed to graduate college- and career-ready.

There is a recognition that progress cannot be made without seeking outside assistance with capacity building to allow them continue on their own after one year of implementation. There is a focus on job-embedded- professional-development to assist teachers in transforming instruction by adding rigor and relevance to plan curriculum, deliver instruction, and monitor progress. These goals include

few activities or deliverables. Research into programs that could be used to implement change have been looked into but not selected. Timelines are listed in very general terms. Since these requirements have not been included, teachers' ability to transform instruction by adding rigor and relevance to plan curriculum, deliver instruction, and monitor progress cannot be evaluated. Specific training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable teachers to structure an effective learning environment have not been selected. This section is rated in the low scoring range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The governing body of the district is The Gary Community School Corporation Board of Trustees and serves as the link between the community and the administration. The role of the Board of School Trustees is that of policy making, appraisal and evaluation.

The district superintendent's office is organized to support administrators, teachers, and non-instructional staff in schools. The various departments are organized to facilitate high quality instruction and student services in the schools.

School leadership meet regularly to assess continuous improvement and provide professional development in areas of critical need in participating schools.

School based administration has flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.

There is a credit recovery program for students who need to make up ground rapidly, or wish to take classes in a non-traditional format. Within GCSC classrooms, students are given many opportunities to progress through topics at their own

rate and show mastery through projects, panel discussions, research reports, and multi-media presentations, as well as traditional paper and pencil tests. Programs that allow for individual pacing and for students to demonstrate mastery of a topic through digital and other means will be sought out.

The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. There are governing bodies at all levels; however, how they will support this grant is not specified. There were no specific activities to show how students of special disabilities or English language learners will have additional methods to demonstrate a topic. This section is rated in the low range.

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

The applicant provides parent access to technology using of an open data format to export information. Many schools have hours of operation that allow parents and other members of the community to use the existing technological resources at the school sites.

The applicant has not provided a high quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure to provide teachers, parents, and educators with the support they need. The Empowerment Zone to be targeted has a high number of low income families. While the school offers access to the school's technology, they do not specify any levels of technical support such as peer or online support. In other sections, the applicant reported a data system; however, there is no evidence of electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning support, or applicable software. This section is scored in the low range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The model of continuous improvement currently implemented in GCSC Empowerment Zone schools uses an eight-step approach led by school based administration and instructional leaders. The applicant believes that the current personalized learning teams have insufficient expertise to support the kinds of professional development required to implement a rigorous continuous improvement plan to meet the requirements of this grant. Through this grant, the GCSC Grant Planning Team proposes to issue an RFP to select a research-based school improvement model. The school improvement model to be chosen must include onsite, ongoing professional development in technology, personalized learning, and use of data to plan instruction.

The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. The goal is to improve student achievement; however, activities, deliverables and other required components of such a plan have not been detailed. The applicant states that research-based models of reform have been researched and several are listed in Section C. None of these models have been chosen; so, how the plan will be monitored, measured, and publicly shared cannot be determined. This section is rated in the low range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is insufficient data provided to prove that ongoing engagement and communication with internal and/or external stakeholders will be implemented. There is no evidence that models to be considered have an ongoing engagement and communication component.

The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. Methods for ongoing communication and engagement have not been provided. Eleven goals are listed; however, activities, deliverables and other required components of such a plan have not been detailed. A research-based reform model has not been selected from the several listed in Section D. How the plan will be monitored, measured, and publicly shared cannot be determined. This section is rated in the low range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Reading performance measures for all students in grades k-3 will be measured using the Dibels assessment. The annual target for improvement is stated as a minimum of 10% each year. The chart is confusing because numbers for the baseline year (2011-2012) are numbers of participating students. The targeted goals appear to be an increase of 9 students a year rather than a percentage based on student achievement. Numbers for math assessment on the mClass is reported with the same numbers used for the reading assessment.

All students in prek-3 grade will be administered an oral social/personal survey. The number of students with a positive response will increase by 10% each year. No baseline data or projected scores for future years have been provided.

The number and percentage of participating students whose teacher meets the definition of being highly effective are presented in a manner that is very difficult to understand. The applicant has not provided a narrative to assist in clarifying what has been presented. A determination that the required data have been provided cannot be made based on the information provided.

Data for the Grade 9 Algebra I End of Course Examination and Grade 10 English End of Course Examination at the West Side Leadership Academy is provided. Data is listed for whole group, African American, economically disadvantaged and students of special education. It is difficult to determine what has been provided in these charts. No narrative or headings are provided to provide clarification on the meaning of the numbers provided..

No rationale for selecting measures has been provided. There is no theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation successes or areas of concern. The applicant has not provided a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve or to monitor its plans or how it will be done when a reform model has been selected. Data are missing or presented in a way that is difficult to interpret. No rationale for selecting the measures was provided. This section is rated in the low scoring range.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of investments in the following ways:

The percentage of students passing Algebra end of course assessments will increase by 10% annually for all sub-groups.

The percentage of students passing end of course assessments in English will increase by 10% annually for all subgroups.

K-3 student's scores on the Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) will increase by a minimum of 10% annually.

Student scores on surveys will increase in overall positive rating by 10% annually.

Professional development activities will be assessed for rigor and relevance. 85% mastery on all assessments will be required.

The number of teachers who are rated as highly effective will increase by a minimum of 10% each year in grant funded schools.

The number of teachers who are rated as effective will increase by 10% each year in grant funded schools.

The number of principals who are rated as highly effective will increase by 10% each year in grant funded schools.

The number of principals who are rated as effective will increase by 10% each year in grant funded schools.

Teachers, School Leadership Teams, and the District Leadership Team for RttT-D-D will annually evaluate the effectiveness of outside partners for school improvement.

Stakeholder surveys will be distributed to parents, municipal leaders, partners, and other members of the community annually to evaluate the impact of the reform.

The Gary Community School Corporation Board of Trustees will evaluate the progress of the reform annually.

The applicant's funded activities will focus on professional development instructional materials, assessments, and technology upgrades. There are no evaluation measures outlined within the proposal.

The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its plan. While the goals have been

selected, the mechanisms to evaluate these measures have not been selected or are not currently available. An outside partner or partners have not been selected. Professional development is tied to the determination of these partners. The various surveys mentioned have not been developed. The process for the Gary Community School Corporation Board of Trustees to evaluate the reform was not described in this or other sections of the proposal. Activities that employ technology have not been provided. This section is rated in the low scoring range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant's budget is based only on the RttT-D funds. The narrative states that additional support will be provided using Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A, IDEA (special education) funds; however, no specific details regarding these funds is provided.

(b) The budget is divided evenly among three areas:

- Personalized Learning Opportunities for Grades K-12
- Alternative Pathways for Graduation for Grades 7 -12
- Behavior Interventions through RTI Model (K-12)

The applicant's proposal did not include specifics related to the plan's implementation. This makes it difficult to determine whether the funds are reasonable and sufficient. Costs are divided evenly among the budget categories indicating that a rationale has not been selected for allocating funds.

(c) Funds to be used for one-time investments are:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Literacy and Math interventions | \$8,928,000 |
| • Technology hardware to support personalized learning | \$9,870,000 |
| • Community involvement | \$ 200,000 |

The one-time investments are 95% of the grant funds. The narrative did not include specifics on how these costs were determined. There is insufficient narrative provided to determine how the budget would assist in ensuring long term sustainability of personalized learning environments.

The applicant has not clearly provided a thoughtful rational for investments and priorities. This section is rated in the low scoring range.

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

The applicant's plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant is to practice flexibility in the use of future federal, local, and state funds through creative blending strategies, to continue to search for grants and other sources of funding, and to enlist the support of district partnerships. There is no plan included on how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget. There is no estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds. There was no specific support from State and local government leaders or financial support. A description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments was not included.

Throughout the application, the applicant has not provided a high-quality plan to implement personalized learning consistent with the RttT-D goals. The lack of information and plan inhibit the determination that the applicant has a high-

quality plan for the sustainability for project goals.

This section is scored in the low range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Description of coherent and sustainable partnership

GCSC has developed a district-wide safe schools task force to address any safety concerns that parents, students, staff, or concerned citizens may have. Safe school forums are held in every school building as well as on the district level. Partnerships have been formed with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana and the University of Indiana to provide summer programs to keep students safe during the summer and the Gary Police Department to address truancy issues. Other initiatives to address youth problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school are cited. The Response to Intervention the three levels intensity were described to meet the needs students with learning or behavior issues.

Population-level desired results

The applicant has provided desired educational results and family and community results by grade spans and for all students. These are consistent with the four priorities required in section A1.

Track the selected indicators

The CTC Indiana Youth Survey behavioral will be used for non-cognitive progress for students in grades 4-12. A checklist to evaluate non-cognitive, social/personal performance measures of students in grades k-3. This will include oral surveys and behavioral reports, as well as information gathered from annual health screenings. A point value will be assessed to determine overall positive, mild concern, and significant concern values.

Use data to target resources

Results of the Indiana Youth Survey over the last four years identified the following target areas.

High Risk for Laws and Norms favorable to Drug Use (Community Domain)

High Risk for Family Conflict (Family Domain)

Extremely High Risk for Interaction with Antisocial Peers (Peer and Individual)

Low Protection for Community Rewards for Involvement (Community domain)

Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond participating students

Support to scale the model is provided by the Mayor Gary Mayor Freeman through the Communities that Care partnership. Collaboration among GCSC and its partners will be done in the quarterly meetings and shared at Project Advisory meetings.

Engage parents of families of participating students

The Parent Teacher Association at each participating school will support the implementation of student engagement. A Project Advisory Committee will be formed with volunteer peer leaders or mentors. Feedback from families will be provided through surveys and other evaluative measures.

Routinely assess CSC progress in implementing plan

The Project Advisory Committee, along with participating partners, will assess the program's progress quarterly and annually. Monthly partner and Advisory Committee meetings will provide ongoing evaluation and troubleshoot any problems which may arise. Feedback from parents, students, and community members will also be included in these meeting discussions.

Identify annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures

Four goals have been determined to decrease the number of expulsions, to decrease number of suspensions, to increase the number of Pre-K-3 students

The applicant has demonstrated the extent to which it proposes to integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of the participating students in the Empowerment Zone. Ambitious goals have been set to reach out to students to identify needs and to decrease expulsions and suspensions. The partnerships are currently in place and there are plans to include more partnerships. There is no description of how the capacity of staff in participating schools will be provided with tools and supports however, surveys to identify needs, a decision-making process and infrastructure, parental engagement, and routine assessments have been provided. This section is rated in the mid scoring range.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not coherently and comprehensively addressed 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. The needs of the district and the students are clear; however, the plan fails to articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The description of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments is not provided. The applicant has clearly stated that the district needs outside intervention to provide support to staff to implement a plan. Such an intervention has not been identified. A description of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments is not and could not be included until the implementation plan has been determined.

The districts reports that a robust data system is in place. Data from this system is not provided in a coherent and comprehensive manner.

One example of how the applicant did not meet the Absolute Priority 1 is insufficient data was provided to determine whether the applicant's vision would result in student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable goals. The data was incomplete and poorly organized. No narrative was provided to enhance the meaning of the data that was provided

Another example of how the applicant did not meet the Absolute Priority 1 is that there is a recognition that progress cannot be made without seeking outside assistance with capacity building to allow them continue on their own after one year of implementation. There is a focus on job-embedded- professional-development to assist teachers in transforming instruction by adding rigor and relevance to plan curriculum, deliver instruction, and monitor progress. These goals include few activities or deliverables. Research into programs that could be used to implement change have been investigated but not solidified. Timelines are listed only in very general terms. Since these requirements have not been included, teachers' ability to transform instruction by adding rigor and relevance to plan curriculum, deliver instruction, and monitor progress cannot be evaluated. Specific training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable teachers to structure an effective learning environment have not been selected. This is a significant portion of the application and the applicant has not provided significant specifics to demonstrate that such a plan could carried out successfully.

Total	210	53
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0113IN-3 for Gary Community School Corporation

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has presented a vision of how it intends to meet four core educational assurance areas through implementing rigorous standards and assessments by 2015-16, building partnerships with local universities to recruit and retain highly effective and effective teachers and principals, building robust data systems, and turning around lowest-achieving schools.</p> <p>The applicant identified three target goals that the applicant will streamline with the core assurance areas: personalized learning opportunities, alternative pathways to graduation, and socio-emotional learning and support.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant states briefly how the core assurance areas and target goals will be streamlined and result in accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support but the applicant does not flesh out any details in how it intends to make this happen therefore it is hard to consider the proposal "comprehensive and credible," at all.</p> <p>Furthermore, there's no discussion on what classroom experience will be like for the students and teachers participating in the project.</p> <p>The applicant receives 6 out of 10 points.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As a part of the applicant's approach to implementation, the applicant has identified 7 schools but the list shows 11 schools so it is not clear, which schools are participating in this project. Furthermore, the applicant did not describe in details how it identified the participating schools other than state that the participating schools are a part of the "Turn Around Empowerment Zone," and the applicant does not provide any description of the Zone and how it was set up. The applicant adds that the chosen schools have student population that meet the selection criteria of having more than 40% of the student population identified as coming from low income families. Adding to the confusion, the table on performance measures shows data for four schools.</p> <p>Due to unclear explanations for identifying participating schools and missing data, the applicant receives 4 out of 10 points.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant explains that the model for reform will depend on New Model for School Improvement, 1:1 Technology Initiative to Increase Capacity and Equity, Digital Curriculum in High School Core Subjects, and After School Program and Saturday Academics.</p> <p>The applicant explains that its new model for school improvement includes partnering with outside agencies and vendors, who have proven track record of success. Additionally, the model will result in stronger professional development, which</p>		

will lead to teachers implementing personalized learning and teaching in the classrooms. Ultimately, this will lead to rigorous, relevant and more meaningful instruction for the students.

The plan also includes purchasing iPads for each student but the applicant does not offer any specifics on how iPads will lead to LEA-wide reform and change.

The applicant explains that it will increase after-school tutoring and programs including Saturday Academies to help the students catch up. Also, the applicant explains that the after school programs will allow the district to take care of the students, who may be latchkey children and ensure that they are safe and staying out of trouble.

The applicant has stated that through this, they will be able implement personalized learning and teaching that can be scaled up district-wide. However, the applicant doesn't provide any details on how it plans to scale up district-wide.

In addition, the applicant included in the proposal a figure showing how six components will result in increased student performance. The components are Technology, Personalized Learning, After School Tutoring, Community Partnerships, Professional Development, and College and Career Standards.

The applicant doesn't really provide any high-quality plan even though the applicant lists some info in Section (A)(2) and other info in Section (A)(4) but the Section on (A)(3): LEA-wide reforms & changes offers little in terms of how the applicant will make all of this happen.

Due to ambiguity in the details, the applicant receives 3 out of 10 points.

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

The applicant has presented LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes including providing tables showing baselines and target goals for four performance areas: performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. In terms of performance measures, the applicant needs to show that their goals are ambitious yet achievable.

The following tables show baselines and target goals for ISTEP proficiency, Math achievement for subgroups, decreasing achievement ISTEP and Math gaps, and graduation rates for subgroups. There's nothing on college enrollment. Generally, the target scores are ambitious but probably not achievable. For instance, currently, overall children are scoring 54.2% on 3rd grade ISTEP assessment and target score for SY2017-18 is 94.2% meaning 40% increase over five year period, which would be very ambitious and might not be achievable. Another example would be graduation rate for Special Education children with 43.6% graduating in 2012-13 and the applicant hopes to increase that to 83% by 2017-18. That's almost doubling the number of graduates within 5 year period. That would be a daunting task.

There is no data on one of the required performance measures: College Enrollment. There is no baseline and no target annual goals .

Another area of concern is some data for children with disabilities are suppressed and not included in the discussion. The selection criteria clearly asks the applicant to include data for all students including students with disabilities and to suppress and exclude them is not acceptable.

The applicant has presented a vision but the performance measures are too ambitious and some of them may not be achievable. Furthermore, there are parts of performance measures that are missing some baseline data. For that reason, the applicant receives 5 out of 10 points.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There's no clear narrative or demonstrated evidence of success.

What the applicant has done is provide a laundry list of several different initiatives that promoted reform such as Gear-Up Initiative, Health Science Summer Program, and Competitive Edge Summer Program, to name a few:

- Gear-Up Initiative: This is a federal initiative that provides training to 7th to 12th graders to help them develop

college-readiness skills.

- Health Science Summer: This is a program for those students who are interested in medical field and health professionals.
- Competitive Edge Summer Program: A collaborative hands-on mathematics and science program for rising high school juniors to facilitate skill development in the field of math and science

The list shows only a few programs but there isn't any initiatives or programs that come from the applicant's office so it is difficult to determine whether the applicant has demonstrated evidence of success in improving student learning outcomes.

In addition, some of the other initiatives listed under (B)(1) section are not necessarily directly tied to school achievement such as University of Northern Iowa Scholarship Program and uniforms.

For this section, the applicant needs to demonstrate evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years such as student outcomes, closing of achievement gaps or other student-based outcomes. Ideally, the applicant needs to provide some data showing that the programs outlined above did result in improved student outcomes or performance.

In addition to that, the applicant did not provide any evidence of ambitious and significant reform and did not provide any comments on how it is making data available to students, educators and parents.

The applicant shall receive 3 out of 15 points.

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

In regard to increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, the applicant makes district and school budgets available to the public through board meetings and local newspapers. The applicant adds that the district does make salary schedules available through human resources documents.

The district needs to do more than just sharing information at board meetings and posting information in newspapers. The district need to consider publishing information on district websites, which would make the information even more accessible and available to the public.

The applicant will receive 3 out of 5 points.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In ensuring that the applicant has the right state context for the implementation of personalized learning model, the applicant has not demonstrated directly any evidence that would lead one to believe that the applicant has the right context for implementing personalized learning model. However, the previous sections provides a brief explanation that one can transpose to this section. The applicant explains that the State has revised state definition of textbook to include digital content, which would mean that the applicant can use electronic content as a part of its "textbook."

However, there's nothing else in the section that provides evidence that the applicant has the right context to implement personalized learning context. For that reason, the applicant will receive 1 out of 10 points.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	3
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant supplied several letters from different offices, agencies and organizations supporting the applicant's grant proposal but the applicant did not provide description of how students, families, teachers, and principals were engaged. Nor did the applicant provide any discussion on how they were able to engage stakeholders in "the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback," (Selection Criteria (B)(4)).

The applicant did receive support in the form of letters from: State Department of Education, Office of Mayor, State Legislators, a local university, and a local nonprofit organization.

In addition, there's no indication of support from collective bargaining representation or parent organizations.

For that reason, the applicant receives 3 out of 15 points.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has developed a comprehensive reform with focus on developing personalized learning approach for all students through innovative practices, partnerships with local organizations and use of data.</p> <p>Also incorporated in the proposal is professional development the applicant intends to make a part of the full slate of reform. The applicant starts with a discussion on student engagement and proceeds to offer how it intends to make education more interesting and meaningful for the students through collaborating with the local programs such as S.A.I.L., G.E.A.R., & West Side Theater Guild. The applicant also explains that it hopes to make data more accessible and meaningful as students and educators move to more personalized learning approach.</p> <p>One of the criteria for a comprehensive and coherent reform is the applicant must present a high quality plan which includes details on how the applicant plans to "approach learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students in an age-appropriate manner such that all students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals," (Selection Criteria (C)(1)(a)(i)). However, the applicant does not provide much details on what they intend to do to help students understand fundamentally how learning will impact their success. The proposal appears to be somewhat incoherent and does not flow logically even though it has some merits. For instance, the applicant moves from discussing low student engagement to digital curriculum and 1:1 technology to student executive functions without providing any groundwork on how they are connected. It is evident that the applicant has a vision but the applicant does not present it in a way that allows for a logical flow of how a set of skills can be built on next set of skills, which is where the proposal falls apart.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant doesn't really discuss how it intends to set up a system that will allow for students to gain access to "personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development" even though it does present a general sense of how the applicant intends to raise student performance but it does not lay it out clearly.</p> <p>However, in the following section, the applicant discusses how it intends to design personalized learning environment for the students including laying down the foundation for digital-based learning approach. One of the key concepts that the applicant has discussed in the proposal focuses on starting early including teaching digitally to primary grade students.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't discuss how it plans to incorporate parents into the plan.</p> <p>With a strong, yet incoherent model for reform, the applicant does present many wonderful ideas but doesn't connect them in a way that makes for a clear picture of how the applicant intends to approach this reform. The applicant receives 13 out of 20 points.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant explains that 1:1 technology is the cornerstone of the change in the schools with focus on providing professional development to equip and prepare teachers for this task. The applicant proposes a detailed plan for developing skills through five key principles: assessment for learning, teaching and learning strategies, curriculum entitlement and choice, student-centered approach to school organization and strong partnership beyond the school.</p> <p>In Section (C)(1), the applicant mentions professional development for teachers and administrators centered on understanding and implementing College and Career Ready Standards, creating rigorous learning environments and instructional strategies, using data to inform instruction and collaborating for continuous professional learning but mainly, the proposal focuses on assisting teachers and leaders in "creating a culture of high expectations." The following sections do not provide details on what that would mean for the educators. There are scant details on who will provide the professional development and how the applicant will tailor the professional development to match the needs of the teachers within the district.</p> <p>The applicant talks a little about Charlotte Danielson teacher evaluation model but does not offer any details about the evaluation system. The applicant states that principals will be evaluated by district superintendents and the evaluations will be based on student performance, school culture, and various leadership measures but does not provide any specifics about the principal evaluation system except to say that it is being developed.</p> <p>Additionally, the applicant does not provide many details on how the applicant will build capacity, train teachers to use data</p>		
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system, and staff hard-to-teach classes.

In fact, the applicant discusses more about how it intends to develop students and does not really answer the criteria for this particular section. For this reason, the applicant receives 5 out of 20 points.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant hasn't presented a high quality plan in the area of "LEA practices, policies, and rules," (Selection Criteria (D)(1)). The criteria ask that the applicant present evidence on how LEA central office has been restructured to better support the initiative and how it has granted the authority and the autonomy to the local schools and school leadership to make decisions that will allow it to successfully implement personalized learning environment.</p> <p>Rather, the applicant describes how the school board will review proposals that are brought to them and how they will make decisions "following careful research, thoughtful consideration and lengthy deliberations." This confirms that the Board is making decisions, not the central office.</p> <p>The applicant adds later in the section that the schools have the authority to make decisions relating to calendars, staffing, budget and others.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant discussed how it will set up credit recovery program to allow students to make up for time lost to learning. Using the Five Key Principles to Personalized Learning will enable the students to master of standards in multiple ways.</p> <p>However, the section is short on details and the applicant doesn't provide much details on how it intends to address each component within the section. For that reason, the applicant will receive 7 out of 15 points.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The selection criteria explains that the applicant must have the right condition to promote personalized learning meaning LEA and school infrastructures are necessary to make this happen.</p> <p>In the proposal, the applicant explains that it will allow parent access to technology and make use of an open data format to allow for exporting information. The applicant adds that "many" district schools have hours of operation that will allow parents and other members of the community to use the existing technological resources.</p> <p>However, there's no discussion on whether the applicant or the district will provide technical support or ensuring that the LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems to engender greater data sharing between schools or schools and parents. In addition, there's no discussion on whether the applicant intends to set up an interoperable data system to share human resources data, budget data, or LEA-based data and information.</p> <p>The applicant earns 2 out of 10 points.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In regard to developing 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 during and after the term of the grant," the applicant has not submitted a high quality plan.</p> <p>The applicant has stated that it is currently evaluating the progress toward project goals through a 8-step approach but the applicant does not list the steps involved in the approach. Rather, the applicant states that the school based</p>		

administrators and instructional leaders lack the expertise to monitor the progress. Additionally, the applicant explains that the Empowerment Zone schools "have not been able to build sufficient capacity within to make substantive differences in student performances using the current school improvement model." It is not clear if the 8-step approach has been implemented and is currently in use by the school leadership. If that's the case, the applicant is, in essence, saying that the schools are able to collect feedback but are unable to utilize the feedback to support further changes as a part of ongoing corrections and improvements.

The applicant explains that due to limited experience, the district will submit a RFP to vendors and invite them to develop a research-based school improvement model that includes focus on onsite professional development in technology-imbedded instruction, personalized learning, and using data to plan instruction.

The applicant adds that it will use Charlotte Danielson model for teacher evaluation but fails to explain how the evaluation model is tied to the plan for continuous improvement.

The applicant explains that it will use survey "to determine the non-cognitive progress of students," as a part of the whole evaluation process. The information will allow the applicant to gain insight into how students, staff, and the community perceive levels of rigor, relevance, and relationships in school, develop the direction for increasing student achievement, and collect data to inform school improvement plans. However, it is unclear how this will help the applicant or the third party evaluator to implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback for ongoing corrections and improvements.

The applicant does not comment on whether it will publicly share the information on the quality of its investments.

Conclusively, the applicant fails to provide a cohesive plan for continuous improvement. In addition, the applicant does not provide any specifics on how it will publicly share their findings with essential stakeholders. For that reason, the applicant receives 5 out of 15 points.

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

5

1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant explains that it will be asking students and staff for "feedback about their experiences in school (which) can initiate innovative, meaningful school change." The applicant expands on this and states that the feedback will give school and district leaders some insight into how students, teachers, and community members such as parents perceive "rigor, relevance, and relationships" within the schools and the district. Using the information, the district leaders will develop a plan to improve student achievement and collect data to inform school improvement plans. Surveys will be used to gather input from a variety of stakeholders about their perceptions of "learning environment, a common shared vision, and effectiveness of instruction and leadership in the school."

Reading the proposal under (E)(2) section, the comments can be perceived as a general plan to gather input without giving any specifics about how and when the input will be collected during the process. This section focuses on how the applicant will implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that will result in collection of timely and regular feedback to guide the improvement process. There is no discussion on how the applicant will gather the input other than surveys and when the input will be gathered to allow for feedback and how the feedback will be incorporated into the improvement process.

The applicant does not provide any details on how it will communicate with external and internal stakeholders.

For this reason, the applicant will get 1 out of 5 points.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided 8 performance measures and didn't include any performance measures relating to FAFSA, college- and career-readiness, and high school health or social-emotional indicator which are three of more crucial performance measures for high school students. In addition to that, the tables are not set up in a logical way for easy read or review. For instance, the applicant flips between reading and math assessments and performance measures on highly effective and effective teachers and principals, which makes it somewhat difficult to follow.

The applicant does not provide rationale for selecting measures, which is one of required criteria. There's no discussion on why the applicants selected those assessment tools as well.

There are also some tables showing undefined shapes on the top row and there's no explanations about what they represent. In addition, some tables, such as mClass Math assessments for elementary students do not have target scores

for aggregated population (male versus female).

The target scores are ambitious yet achievable in some areas but for other areas, they might be unachievable such as kindergartens scoring on mClass Math assessment. Overall, all participating students scored 42 points on the assessment during 2012-13 (which is the baseline) and the target score for SY2017-18 is 93 points. To expect kindergarten double their overall score from 42 to 93 in 5 years can be tough, if not unattainable.

For that reason, the applicant earns 2 out of 5 points.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant explains that it will use measurable student performance indicators to determine whether or not the district's initiative is working. According to the proposal, if the students are not progressing, adjustments will be made to ensure that the students are on a trajectory to meet or exceed expectations. This could be considered as one of the ways to gauge whether the investments are successful but that's the extent of the section on "Evaluating effectiveness of investments." (Selection Criteria (E)(4)). One could infer that if the students are achieving, it is because the professional development is working but that's not necessarily a direct correlation between both factors.

The applicant has **not** presented any plan to evaluate effectiveness of investments and for that reason, the applicant shall receive 0 out of 5 points.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant submitted a budget proposal asking for \$19.997 million to fund the project.

The proposal includes budget tables showing how the applicant will invest \$19 million over four years with the funds supporting personnel, equipment, professional development, community engagement, and indirect costs. Table 1-1 includes some information on one-time expenditures versus on-going expenditures such as equipment (one-time investment) as opposed to personnel and professional development requiring funding for Year 1, 2, and 3, but not Year 4.

There's no explanation on why the applicant isn't planning to fund personnel and professional development for Year 4 but it will allocate some money towards community engagement, and indirect costs for Year 4. There is no clear distinction between the activities for Year 1, 2, and 3 versus Year 4 therefore it is not possible to understand the applicant's logic for not funding personnel and professional development for Year 4.

Table 1-1, also, fails to mention if the applicant will receive funds from other sources. Line 12 on the table shows that the applicant has accounted for the possibility of receiving funds from external sources but do not list how much it will receive annually during the grant cycle. One of the criteria asks that the applicant describes "all of the funds such as district grant, external foundation, LEA, State, and other Federal funds," (Selection Criteria (F)(1)(c)(i)). The budget narrative states, "These additional funds will support the sustainability (of the project)," but the applicant does not list who will be providing the additional funds.

The following narrative provides in-depth discussion on how the applicant will split the RTT-D grant evenly into three subprojects: Personalized Learning Opportunities, Alternative Pathways for Graduation, and Behavior Interventions through Rtl Model. The subprojects reflect the core goals that the applicant established in the beginning of the proposal (under Section (A)). The applicant provides detailed narrative for each subproject budget including personnel, equipment, and indirect costs.

At the end of the proposal, the applicant provides explanations for each itemized costs such as personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, training stipends, and others. The applicant also lists which of those itemized costs will be one-time costs and which of those will be on-going costs.

The budget appears to be detailed and provides rationale for each project and subproject expenditures. However, the applicant does not provide many details on external sources and for that reason, the applicant receives 7 out of 10 points.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not offer any details on how it intends to sustain the project other than making a very broad statement, "To sustain the success of this project, we will practice flexibility in the use of future federal, local, and state funds through creative blending strategies and we will continue to search for grants and other sources of funding."

Conclusively, the applicant has not submitted a plan for sustaining the project post-grant. For that reason, the applicant receives 0 out of 10 points.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a description of partnership that will support this project. The applicant lists Boys and Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana, Project Rebuild, and West Side HS Leadership Accord Program as the partnering organizations that will support the project. And they will provide support to the students in the areas of truancy, public health and intervention. Specifically, the Boys and Girls Club will provide after school and summer programs; Project Rebuild will attempt to reduce truancy and improve overall attendance in programs. Also, West Side High School Leadership Accord Program will establish Developing Options Opportunities for Responsible Students (DOORS) and the program will provide them with mentoring, employment opportunities, college scholarships, and medical/social-emotional resources.

The applicant also identified 7 population-level desired results with focus on family and community support. The desired results are student participating in DOORS program, maintaining high level of punctuality and attendance, reduction in student infractions, ensuring a high percent of students staying on target in their grade level, reduction in student dropout and failure rates, high achievement of SAT, ACT and ISTEP scores, and high graduation rates. All very important and admirable in improving the quality of education for all children in the district.

The applicant has outlined how partnering organizations and programs will provide support to the community.

The applicant did not provide much insight into the strategy it will employ to scale up the model beyond the participating students.

As for how the partnership will support the goals of the community, it is evident that the applicant has a strong vision to use education to impact the community and vice versa. The applicant will focus on accelerating personalized learning with students in poverty. Through supporting the students living in poverty, the applicant hopes to reduce crime, drug use and alcohol use. The community has a similar agenda which indicates that the goals are well aligned with the goals within the schools. The applicant believes that personalized learning will address this issue.

Finally, the applicant has a good vision of how it intends to increase parental involvement and communications between the parents and the schools.

It is unclear if the CPP: Ambitious yet Achievable Performance Measures table is correct as two of the indicators asked that expulsions and suspensions be reduced yet the target goals increase so it is unclear if it is incorrect. Otherwise, the measures look ambitious yet achievable.

The applicant receives 8 out of 10 points.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

At the end of the day, it is critical that the applicant is successful in establishing personalized learning environment where all students will be college- or career-ready. From the start to the end, the applicant has offered a vision of how it will create personalized learning opportunities, alternative pathways to graduation, and socio-emotional learning and support.

But it is not clear if the proposal will successfully create those opportunities. The applicant has offered some details on how it will provide professional development and how it will partner with local organizations to support development outside the schools. But the participant did not offer enough details on how it will establish data systems to support this initiative. In addition, it does not offer many details on how it will recruit and retain teachers.

Due to overall score and limited details, the applicant has not met the criteria.

Total	210	78
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