



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0203KY-2 for Kenton County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes an overarching goal of enhancing student learning by creating technology infused classrooms that are student driven, data oriented, and rigorous. The work to achieve this is centered around six focus area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and personalized learning • comprehensive systems of learning supports • world class knowledge and skills • performance-based learning • anywhere, anytime learning opportunities • authentic student voice <p>This work will build on existing work to form the Kenton County Academies of Innovation and Technology which includes six academies developed with an inquiry and performance based model which intentionally blurs the lines between the academic and the technical through project based learning. This existing work sets the stage for further work. While this is commendable work for students in high school, it is unclear how the proposal is envisioned to impact younger students.</p> <p>The applicant has processes in place already that focus its Common Core State Standards implementation work and leverage collaborative structures in place. Two design collaboratives have been in place for three years to support ongoing development and refinement of instructional content, tools, strategies, and assessments in mathematics and literacy. The work is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and further supported by large district investments. While there is an impressive list of things happening in the district and a worthy vision, the proposal provides insufficient detail to evoke a sense of confidence in the vision.</p> <p>Additionally, the application states that there have been many efforts to leverage technology to improve teaching and learning over the past five years. This work is reported to have allowed teachers to use standards-based assessment and reporting practices to ensure students are experiencing personalized instruction and support toward college and career readiness. However, the proposal fails to paint a picture of what this looks like.</p> <p>Considered together, the four educational assurance areas are addressed within this current and proposed work, but the lack of details raises serious questions about the coherence and comprehensive nature of the vision. This application has real potential to make substantive, positive changes to teaching and learning, but the applicant has not provided enough detail to demonstrate that the vision can be carried forward into action.</p> <p>The applicant also notes efforts to increase graduation rates by providing quality instruction, active student engagement, and developing and maintaining strong relationships with students, parents, and business partners. The applicant has increased the compulsory attendance age and makes an explicit connection between innovative delivery of curriculum and drop-out prevention. While dropout prevention is a worthy goal, it is unclear what impact changing the dropout age has had on student learning when students who would rather not be in school are required to be there. There is a stated goal related to connection to school, which is a dropout factor: "Beginning in fourth grade, all students will participate in at least one activity providing a meaningful connection to school beyond the regular classroom." However, there is no rationale for this goal, nor is there any evidence that a plan is in place to address it.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants have chosen to include all schools in the proposal. This includes eighteen traditional schools (eleven elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools), as well as a preschool, and two academies which represent 40.1% low-income students. By doing so, the applicants have met the requirements for total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high need students, and participating educators. The application includes a list of schools that will participate and the required subgroup numbers. However, the application lacks any description of the process used to determine if all schools are ready for and would benefit from the proposal.

The applicant's approach to implementation is promising, relying on systems such as the Design Collaboratives and supports such as 21st Century Learning Coaches and College and Career Readiness coaches. While these systems have the potential to build capacity across the district to effectively do the work that is proposed, the plan lacks details to support how this work will happen.

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

A high quality plan must include key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible for implementing the activities. These things, considered together, should be credible. The application describes how a 1:1 iPad initiative will be scaled up to more classrooms, but does not provide data or decision-process that supports the plan to scale up.

The applicant provides a list of goals:

- All students will perform at or above grade level in numeracy and literacy at each transition point.
- All "professional practices" will be based on a common understanding of quality instruction and best practices for every student, in every classroom, every day.
- Beginning in fourth grade, all students will participate in at least one activity providing a meaningful connection to school beyond the regular classroom.

Additionally, the application includes some activities to be undertaken, specifically related to hiring, training, and implementing. These are attached to timelines, but the persons responsible and deliverables require some inference on part of the reader. The applicant does describe how a pilot iPad initiative will be scaled up, but there is no clear connection that shows how this will support LEA-wide change and reach the described goals. Overall, the proposal lacks the necessary detail required to persuade readers that there is the capacity to put the vision into action.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application notes improvement the district has already seen based on Kentucky school district rankings and identifies annual performance goals that exceed the state's ESEA targets. However, it is not clear how these are calculated and what efforts led to improvement. The applicant emphasizes that the focus will be on accelerating the progress of the lowest achieving, highest need students in order to meet overall district improvement goals, but there is no description of how that will happen.

The application includes annual goals for the student population overall and for elementary, middle, and high school categories, but they are not divided into the subgroups required in the notice. It is also unclear why the applicant combined reading and mathematics for growth goals. These are clear missed opportunities to track and influence growth in these areas.

The applicant addresses goals aimed at decreasing achievement gaps by pointing to a statewide process in place in Kentucky. The applicants provide a Gap to Goal report that identifies annual goals that appear both ambitious and achievable as required in the selection criteria. Goals related to graduation rate are also addressed through the statewide accountability process, which meets the ambitious and achievable requirement. However, there is no evidence of local ownership of the data or process described.

College enrollment rates track at a similar rate to graduation rate goals, but are only offered for the overall student category. Overall, this application scores in the medium range for LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes.

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	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes some particularly strong practices that are supported by rich partnerships and a focus on bringing substantive changes to teaching and learning that better prepare students for life outside of school. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being named an Exemplar School District by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills • participation in Districts of Innovation with a focus on developing and refining a vision for teaching and learning • participation in Next Generation meetings at the state level • use of visioning teams to develop a plan for integration and expansion of 21st century learning <p>Further strengthening this work is a clear and consistent focus on critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. The applicant also demonstrates a strong record of meaningful collaboration with families and business partners that brings them into processes that have significant impact on the way teaching and learning happens in the district.</p> <p>However, while the applicant demonstrates gains shown on the Kentucky School and District Report Card, there is not four years of student learning and achievement data provided to demonstrate a clear track record of success in the way required in the selection criteria. Because of this, the application scores in the medium range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicants have provided evidence of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments through a description of available reports and resources that provide actual personnel salaries. District information, including salaries, is accessible and widely disseminated through an annual school report card which is printed in newspapers and available on multiple websites. Additionally, the applicant describes processes that invite meaningful participation in decision-making for parents and community members. However, there is no school level data, nor is data provided by required categories. Further, the applicant does not show evidence of improvement in transparency practices.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided some evidence of conditions and autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environment described. The applicant notes that the State of Kentucky passed significant school reforms that changed school governance by introducing School-Based Decision Making councils that promote shared leadership among those closest to students. However, this change happened in 1990. It is unclear how the change in decision-making processes has played out at the local level, which leave the reader to make guesses as to how it will play out in the proposed efforts. Without further detail, the application provides weak evidence of conditions and sufficient autonomy for the proposal.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicants describe a process of stakeholder engagement that includes representation from administrators and teachers. Specifically, all administrators were involved in the development of the plan, and the local education association was asked to comment on and make suggestions for revision to the proposal. The local advocacy unit was asked to comment on the proposal. While feedback was received from teachers, it is not clear that feedback was incorporated into the proposal. It is unclear if and how parents and students were included in the grant process. The applicants included feedback received in the appendix of the grant application, but it is unclear that feedback was used in the process of writing the grant proposal. For example, there is an email from the state Department of Education suggesting further elaboration on the ideas in the proposal. The proposal as submitted for review is still in need of further elaboration to generate a sense of confidence that the district has planned at sufficient depth.</p> <p>The application includes many letters of support that represent a range of stakeholders from PTAs, school based decision making councils, local businesses, political leaders, and educational organizations. However, the only letter from a teacher is not signed, and there are no letters of support from students. The applicants provide moderate evidence meaningful</p>		

stakeholder engagement and support.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a desire to make every student an informed and engaged learner who can monitor his or her own learning and growth. However, there is little detail provided to describe how this will happen or how the applicant will know if it is happening. By leveraging the opportunities blended, tech-rich classes bring, the applicant wants students to have access to learning anytime and anywhere. Further, the proposal states a desire to create an engaging and supportive learning environment steeped in deep, focused learning. However, the applicant provides the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attendance and decreased disciplinary events • Improved career skills and college readiness • Improved student motivation and learning <p>There is not a clear relationship between the described outcomes and the stated goals.</p> <p>In addition to curriculum design collaboratives that will support alignment efforts, the applicant describes an expanded role for College and Career Coaches in each of the three traditional high schools in the district. The clear connection to local industry trends has strong potential to positively impact students' college and career readiness. This support specifically helps students identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards, as well as understand how to structure their learning to achieve goals and measure progress toward those goals. This is a particular strength of this application.</p> <p>The applicant mentions a well-rounded assessment system to support a system that is responsive to student needs and interests. Specific examples provided include Compass Learning, Measures of Academic Progress, and Springboard. While these all may be quality tools, there is no description of how these will come together to create that responsive system. There is a need for substantive professional development, training, and systems of support to ensure teachers will have the necessary skills and knowledge to create high quality digital content to support student mastery of college and career ready standards. It is unclear whether or not this is developed fully. The state Continuous Improvement Instructional Technology System database may very well allow student data to be updated frequently and used to track and guide progress toward these standards, but there is no detail about how that will happen.</p> <p>Overall, though the applicant provides a provocative overview of a promising approach to learning that is just not fully developed. There are too many assumptions that have to be made to put all the pieces together into a high quality plan as required by the selection criteria.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The support for educators to engage in training and professional communities that support both individual and collective capacity to implement personalized learning and adapt to provide opportunities for students to engage in learning tasks in response to their academic needs, interests, and optimal learning approaches is a strength of this application. The application describes a system of coaches who provide modeling and direct support in both face to face and virtual settings. Additionally, teachers have additional days of professional development during the grant period to build capacity and momentum with new approaches to teaching and learning. This approach to professional development has a strong likelihood of increasing the professional capacity of educators to create lasting impact in an improving system.</p> <p>The application describes a statewide evaluation and feedback process built on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for teaching that tracks educator performance and growth. The approach includes traditional and peer observations, student input, and a professional growth plan. A version of this system, developed locally with Board members, teachers, and administrators has already been in place in the district for four years. Based on these things, there is evidence that the proposal will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation system.</p> <p>Similarly, the applicant describes a system to ensure teachers track and use tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. The applicant describes a well-</p>		
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rounded assessment model to support a system that is responsive to student needs and interests. Specific examples provided include Compass Learning, Measures of Academic Progress, and Springboard. There is a substantive professional development, training, and support system that ensures teachers will have the necessary skills and knowledge to create high quality digital content to support student mastery of college and career ready standards. Combined with the state CIITS database there is strong evidence that student data will be updated frequently and used to track and guide progress toward these standards.

Similar to C(1), though the applicant provides a provocative overview of a promising approach to teaching and leading and earns a high score, there are some assumptions that have to be made to put all the pieces together into a high quality plan as required by the selection criteria.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence that LEA practices, policies, and rules are in place to support project implementation. The district is organized in a way that is clearly learning-centered with coaches, consultants, and trainers in support of major initiatives and to provide support and services to all participating schools. Additionally, an Academic Support team is in place to target support for the highest need students and build capacity to continue support after the grant period ends. However, there is no information about how the team functions in order to evoke confidence that the support meets its intent.

The applicant states that school leadership teams have complete autonomy and flexibility over schedule, personnel, and budgets at the school level, but there is no evidence or illustration provided to that end. While timelines for curriculum are developed at the district level, there still appears to be sufficient autonomy at the school level to facilitate personalized learning as required by the selection criteria. What is missing is the plan to do so.

Classroom and assessment tools available in the state-supported CIITS, as well as a focus on blended and tech-enhanced learning, could very well support ample opportunities for students to progress and earn credit based on mastery, as well as demonstrate mastery of college and career ready standards in multiple ways and at multiple times. However, there is no credible description of what practices and policies will be in place to allow this.

Finally, the applicants leave accessibility largely to technology. Overall, the application still scores in the medium range for LEA practices, policies, and rules. Again, this is a proposal with plenty of potential, but it is missing the level of detail required to build a sense of confidence.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes significant efforts to ensure a robust infrastructure to support a tech-rich learning environment, including increasing wireless access points data drops, and network switches. Additionally, the applicants propose increased personnel to support the use of technology to enable quality learning. The 1:1 technology initiative goes a long way to increase equity and access, but it is unclear if there is a plan to ensure internet access for all students outside of the school network.

While there is wide access for students, parents, and educators -- and it is clear that educators and students will have adequate support to use it -- there is no plan for ensuring parents have support to effectively use the information to which they have access.

The applicant does not address the requirements to allow parents and students to export data in an open format, data interoperability, or safety of data storage as required by the selection criteria, earning the applicant a medium score for LEA and school infrastructure.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)



	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant describes a process that will be used for continuous improvement, many elements of a high quality plan as required by the selection criteria are missing. A high quality plan must include key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible for implementing the activities.</p> <p>The applicant notes formative evaluations at the end of each year, a summative evaluation at the end of the grant period, and implementation and impact checks along the way, but fails to provide any details about what those would look like, who would be responsible for them, and the rationale for using them.</p> <p>Because only sketchy details are offered, the plan for continuous improvement does not appear credible, earning a low score for continuous improvement process.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A high quality plan must include key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible for implementing the activities. These things, considered together, should be credible. Again, the application is missing some aspects of a high quality plan as required by the selection criteria. Specifically, the plan does not provide a clear timeline for communication and engagement, nor is it always clear who will be responsible for actions, such as maintaining Facebook and Twitter accounts. While there is some rationale provided, it is vague and general. For example, the use of social media as a means for communication is supported only by a qualifier "in this era of social media."</p> <p>The activities that are offered make sense and point to an understanding of contemporary and progressive means of ongoing communication and engagement, but without greater detail and a clear plan, it is difficult to assess the proposal as a credible approach to ongoing communication and engagement.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application offers goals that demonstrate understanding of the importance of a well-rounded education and the diverse indicators that might provide good perspective. For example, the applicants propose tracking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social and emotional prerequisites for kindergarten readiness • confidence, collaboration, problem-solving, and self-esteem • acceleration rates • teacher reports of positive student behaviors <p>However, the applicant fails to provide many of the required performance measures. While it is understandable that time to gather new baseline data would be informative for future goal-setting, the standards of ambitious and achievable can not be determined without goal information.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant describes a process that will be used for evaluating the effectiveness of investments, many elements of a high quality plan as required by the selection criteria are missing. A high quality plan must include key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible for implementing the activities.</p> <p>The applicant notes a current process for evaluating professional development and notes a plan to administer surveys at the end of each year and track student data, but fails to provide any details about what those processes would look like, who would be responsible for them, and the rationale for using them.</p> <p>Because the details are not developed, the plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments does not appear credible, earning a low score for continuous improvement process.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As required by the selection criteria, the applicant's budget identifies all funds that will support the project. However, the applicants did not identify any funds outside of RTTT-D funds that will support the projects. Significant investments are made in areas that are likely to result in capacity building that will sustain an impact after the grant period ends. Also, there is a significant investment in the development of digital curriculum materials that can be used after the grant ends. However, a significant portion of the budget is also allocated to hardware purchases that require a plan for sustainability after the grant period ends.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A high quality plan must include key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible for implementing the activities. These things, considered together, should be credible. Throughout the budget section the applicant identifies clear activities, timelines, and deliverables. Examples of these include: training events as activities, quality digital content as a deliverable, and timelines broken down by year. Rationale for the activities can be inferred from other sections of the grant application. The project elements and budget are cohesive, lending a sense of credibility to the plan.</p> <p>While the applicant invests heavily in capacity building, planning to return coaches to their classrooms and fold technology help into the system, the assertion that iPads will last longer than four years appears unrealistic. Overall, the plan scores in the medium range for sustainability.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not address the Competitive Preference Priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has not met Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments. The applicant has provided an intriguing plan to meet the core educational assurance areas, but it lacks sufficient detail to meet the standards of coherence and credibility.</p> <p>The applicant describes a desire to scale up an existing technology initiative, continue work related to CCSS implementation, move to the next level of work related to 21st century classrooms, and create clear connections to life after to high to school to as means to support the goal of all students graduating on time and ready for college and careers. However, there is very little detail about how the applicant will get from current reality to desired state.</p> <p>The proposal describes a desire to build capacity within the district to substantively change the classroom experience for both teachers and students, ensuring deep learning and real ways for students to take ownership of their own learning, and</p>		

meaningful parent and community involvement. With more development, the plan could be credible and result in more effective educators through a coaching model, supported by a quality evaluation process. However, the proposal as submitted requires far too many assumptions and inferences.

Further, the applicant fails to address plans to increase access to highly effective teachers, nor does it address interventions for high need students.

Total	210	87
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0203KY-3 for Kenton County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has listed three overarching goals in section A1 that relate to its Technology Enhanced Classrooms Heightening Educational Development (TECH ED) proposal.

KCSD has focused on three goals: all students will perform at or above grade level in math and reading, all professional practices will be based on best practices, and all students in grades 4 and above will participate in at least one activity to provide meaningful connections to school. However, baseline data is missing for many of the measures presented in the proposal. There is no indication of targeted professional development to create a common understanding of best practices. The connection activity for older students is not addressed in the plan. Finally, details are not provided to show that the applicant has a credible plan to achieve each of the three goals.

The applicant has affirmed in the signature section that it has an educator evaluation system, is using the Common Core standards, and has a state-wide data system that measures growth and informs educators. The use of the Continuous Improvement Instructional Technology System (CIITS) will be an invaluable tool to provide students, parents, and teachers important student data so that students can monitor their own progress, as well as providing information for teacher professional development.

KCSD has described in the narrative what the classroom experience is like using technology, for both students and teachers. Several general examples are given of how students will experience personalized learning. However, little evidence is given that the plan is thorough, as many details are lacking, such as descriptions of what teachers will do in class with technological tools, how software will be responsive to individual needs, and how teachers might create improved, individualized lesson plans.

This criterion was marked in the low range with 3 points because the applicant presented neither a clear nor a compelling case for its reform vision.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

KCSD has selected a reasonable population to receive services based on RTTD grant funds, as it has chosen all schools and all students K-12.

In particular, the applicant has noted that it will have all schools and all students in grades K-12 participate in the TECH

ED program. However, no decision-making method related to grant participation was described in the application. More details are needed regarding how the district determined participation for all grades, particularly as the focus of TECH ED is on secondary students. It is unclear if younger students will benefit as much as older students.

KCSD has provided evidence in the chart in section A2 of the number of participating students, including the number and percent of students who are from low-income families, as well as the number and percent of students who are high need. The total number of participants is 15080, of which 40.1% are low income, which meets the eligibility criterion of the grant. More than one thousand educators will be impacted by the plan. In addition, all schools are listed in the school demographic chart.

Because the applicant has indicated which schools and students will benefit from the grant, but did not give the decision-making method that resulted in the inclusion of all grade levels, this criterion was marked in the medium range with 7 points.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented evidence that it has laid a foundation for the grant proposal.

KCSD has participated in two small pilot studies related to 1:1 classrooms, with promising results in terms of state assessments. The use of pilot studies indicates a district commitment to cautious planning of reform, while the trial use of digital devices gave the LEA data to measure impact of digital learning on state assessments. However, the advantage gained by the applicant in using pilot studies was tempered by the fact that results from the pilot were not included in the proposal. Unfortunately, the applicant includes no evidence of lessons learned from the pilots that were incorporated into the plan.

All schools in the district will participate in the project initially, and as a result, the applicant did not have to address scaling up the plan to all schools.

There were specific omissions that weakened the applicant's reform proposal. The LEA does not include a logic model or theory of change, and does not provide timelines, deliverables, or parties responsible as part of a high quality plan to support change. It is not clear what activities are related to the proposal's three goals.

While the applicant has established that all schools will participate, it does not present a high quality plan for change. This, this criterion was marked in the middle range, with 3 points.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

KCSD has set out ambitious, yet achievable goals for improved student outcomes.

Using its district report card included in the appendix, the applicant has presented compelling evidence of its current performance with an expansive description of the district. State and district goals are given for many of the performance indicators, which correspond to the project's goals, including performance on state assessments, decreasing achievement gaps and graduation rates. The assessment and gap information are disaggregated by subgroup, giving the performance level by content area and grade level. Section E3 provides ambitious goals of ten percent annual improvement, on average, for performance on state assessments.

In addition, the applicant gives ambitious targets for high school graduation and college enrollment for students in general in section A4. However, as the applicant did not include goals by demographic subgroup, this omission indicates that the district has not contemplated measuring decreasing achievement gaps. The lack of targets for each subgroup makes increased equity unlikely.

The applicant did not address postsecondary degree attainment. No points were deducted for this optional portion.

The applicant does not link activities with improved student results, which weakens the district's evidence for improved student learning. The applicant will hire teaching and learning coaches to improve instruction across the district, and recording software will be used to help teachers create blended learning environments. However, it is not clear how using more technology will improve student scores.

Because KCSD enumerates ambitious, yet achievable goals, but does not provide convincing evidence how the project's activities translate to improved student performance, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 6 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	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a compelling argument for a clear track record of success.</p> <p>KCSD has improved student learning outcomes and closed achievement gaps, as attested by its extremely descriptive district report card in the appendix, which includes performance data by subgroup. The LEA has presented clear and compelling evidence for part a of this criterion, as graduation rates and college-readiness have increased over time. College enrollment information, provided in section A4, indicate an increase over the last four years as well. The district has utilized consultants to improve instruction, as well as has initiated changes in instructional strategies such as the Math Design and Literacy Design Collaboratives.</p> <p>The applicant did not address persistently low achieving schools in the proposal. Some of the data only encompasses two years rather than the required four years of evidence.</p> <p>Students, parents, and the community in general are informed of student performance via the school report card, which is available on the district's website. The state also provides information to students, parents, and educators through its CIITS data system. The district has a history of informing the community and inviting participation in the educational process. For example, community members and other stakeholders are informed of district and campus improvement plans, as evidenced by a sample of letters and meeting notes in the appendix. Meetings have been held with parents to improve the services given to high school students through the KCAIT vocational program.</p> <p>As the applicant has presented a clear track record of success, but with the omission of details about low achieving schools, this criterion was scored in the high range with 13 points.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not provide evidence of a high level of transparency for expenditures.</p> <p>KCSD has presented evidence that it posts various documents online: the Business Operation Manual, the Annual Financial Report, and the budget. The LEA takes a step further by publishing financial reports in the newspaper, which provides additional access to the community. The applicant included the teacher salary schedule in the appendix. However, school level data--actual personnel salaries for instructional staff only, for teachers only, and non-personnel expenditures--were not provided.</p> <p>Because the applicant posts its budget and financial report online, while not providing actual salary details, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 2 points.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has presented evidence that it will have sufficient autonomy for the success of the proposal.</p> <p>As part of the the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, the state created the ability to have School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) councils that allow for local autonomy. The applicant has provided evidence of how local autonomy has been enhanced through specific examples of changes due to the SBDM councils. However, despite having enjoyed autonomy for several years, the LEA did not provide examples of how it has exercised that autonomy. No artifacts from the SBDM were included with the application.</p> <p>KCSD demonstrates that each school will have flexibility to adapt the proposal to the needs of students and staff. In addition, the district gave the state department of education an opportunity to review the application. No additional conditions were placed on the district as part of the grant process.</p> <p>Because the applicant has provided data that it will enjoy successful conditions and autonomy due in a large part to the SBDM mechanism, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 7 points.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA has provided clear evidence of meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal.</p> <p>The mayors in the area were provided copies of the proposal, as well as the state department of education. Comments from these leaders were included in the appendix, and changes in the application reflect these comments. Letters of support from local businesses, a community college, school Parent Teacher Associations, school administrators, mayors and state leaders were included as evidence in the proposal. As the focus of the grant is on the personalization of learning, student voice in the planning process is essential. However, no letters of support were provided from student organizations. The leader of the teachers' organization has signed the proposal application, and the applicant provides data that 84% of all teachers voted in favor of the proposal. Teacher comments were solicited, but no suggestions or comments from teachers were included in the proposal.</p> <p>Because the LEA has demonstrated it has garnered support and comments from a wide audience, with the exception of students, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 10 points.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided partial evidence that it has a plan for engaging all learners.</p> <p>The LEA has provided evidence that all students in every grade will have access to data from the Continuous Improvement Instructional Technology System (CIITS) system.</p> <p>Goals for the Technology Enhanced Classrooms Heightening Educational Development (TECH ED) proposal include increasing student attendance, decreased student discipline incidents, improved college and career readiness, and improved motivation. Recording software will facilitate the blending learning plan, as students can watch and review lessons at their own pace, at any time. Teachers will receive professional development in how to use technology for this purpose.</p> <p>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) data will allow educators to monitor positive behaviors such as increased levels of confidence, collaboration, and self-esteem. The student portal of the CIITS system will permit students to measure progress toward their goals by receiving constantly updated assessment data. Training will be made available to educators, students and parents on how to use the respective CIITS portals. However, there is no provision in a continuous improvement plan to monitor student and parent usage of these portals or of technological devices.</p> <p>Along with the College and Career Coach at each high school, the Kenton County Academies of Innovation and Technology (KCAIT) program will be an opportunity for high school students to explore career opportunities and allow for deep learning in the areas of the six academies (Biomedical Science, Sustainable Energy, High Performance Production, Engineering, Media Arts, and Informatics). However, it is not clear how students at other grade levels will use technology to deepen learning or to have a personalized sequence of instruction.</p> <p>While high schoolers will enjoy a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments with high-quality content, no specific provisions are made for younger students in the proposal.</p> <p>Although all students at all grade levels will participate in the plan, no evidence is given for targeted interventions or accommodations for high need students.</p> <p>While some elements of a high quality plan to increase learning such as key goals and timelines are included in the proposal, deliverables, parties responsible, and specific activities are not present. Furthermore, it is not clear how assessments will be tailored to student needs or how much voice students had in the proposal. No evidence is given for the future inclusion of student voice in the project.</p> <p>As parts of a high quality plan for increasing learning are missing, and little prevision has been made for content for grades</p>		

K-8, this criterion was graded in the low range with 4 points.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has assembled a plan to improve instruction for all teachers in the LEA.

Elements of a high quality plan for improving instruction includes key goals (such as all teachers will be trained in best practices), deliverables, appropriate activities, parties responsible, and are linked to items in the budget narrative. However, the plan lacks specific timelines for some of the activities and completion of goals.

All educators will receive instruction on Technology Enhanced Classrooms Heightening Educational Development (TECH ED), and will receive tools and training in blended learning, including recording software. On-going job embedded professional development will be provided by hiring seven teaching and learning coaches. The reliance on coaches as a method of professional development makes the success of plan more likely. Specific staff development will be centered on the CIITS, SpringBoard, Math and Literacy Design collaboratives, as well as Digital Book. All of the grant related professional development will be focused on school improvement by increasing student usage of technology and increasing student achievement. The digital devices purchased with grant monies lend themselves to personalized learning, as each student will have one device with software responsive to individual needs. However, although successful matching of techniques to improve personalization will be monitored regularly by the project manager as noted in section E1, the yearly review by teachers and students will not be of sufficient frequency to improve ineffective interventions. At a minimum, review of data should occur each grading period to link interventions and academic success.

Feedback from the CIITS on student achievement will inform teacher and principal practice as well as impact educator evaluations, which will help determine individual and collective effectiveness. This state provided system will allow for frequently measured student progress toward college and career standards and graduation, and will give educators data to offer recommendations, supports, and interventions for student and educator improvement.

However, while the applicant has a goal of increasing the number of students served by highly effective educators by 10% as noted in section E3, no specific activities or measures are linked to this goal. There are many activities that will enhance educator effectiveness, but the applicant has not directly linked them to this target.

As the LEA has focused on teacher improvement as one of its three goals for the proposal, and has provided many aspects of a high quality plan for professional development, with only a few details omitted, this criterion was scored in the high range with 16 points.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has provided evidence that there are practices and policies that will support the goals of the project.

The central office has provided campuses with literacy, math, and technology consultants. The LEA has stated that autonomy and flexibility are present at the campus level through the site decision making council. This includes autonomy for school leadership in the areas of staffing, budgets, calendars, and schedules. The receipt of grant funds provides some indirect evidence that the applicant has some flexibility and autonomy. However, no evidence was presented for changes in LEA autonomy based on the favorable legislation in place since 1990.

Using the CIITS, teachers are able to provide students with ways to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways. However, more details are need to demonstrate that these assessments will help teachers personalize learning.

Besides built in iPad tools, little evidence was given that the LEA will ensure that resources and instructional practices will be fully accessible to students with high needs. No evidence was provided that students will be able to earn credit without regard to seat time.

This criterion was scored in the medium range with 9 points, since the LEA has some practices and supports for the

project in place, but no evidence that these are targeted and effective for high need students.

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

10

8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has contemplated how to improve the district's infrastructure for the successful completion of the project.

The district has focused on professional development for all teachers, all of whom will receive two electronic devices. Dedicated personnel will be used for pedagogy related to the new devices, as well as technicians who will ensure the working order of these new tools. Parents, students, and educators all have access to the CIITS via three distinct, targeted portals provided by the state. Each student in the district will also receive a device so that there will be a 1:1 ratio. Trainings will be provided to teachers, who in turn will support students in their use of the new devices. Enhances will be made to increase wireless and cable Internet access, as indicated in the budget narrative.

Some elements of a high quality plan are included in the infrastructure portion of the proposal, including responsible parties (such as technical support, the project manager for TECH ED, and the instructional coaches) , as well as timelines and deliverables. The narrative and budget sections of the proposal both show evidence of the thoughtfulness of the infrastructure portion of the plan. The evidence presented in the plan is compelling, as the applicant not only contemplates purchasing devices, but will train staff and support these devices through improved infrastructure. However, it is not clear if the district will provide on-going support to students and parents via a telephone help desk or an online tool. Furthermore, the applicant has not addressed the need for exporting information to an open data format. While the district has Infinite Campus and CIITS that hold student assessment and instructional improvement data, it has a separate system to house finance and personnel data, MUNIS.

As the LEA has planned for a high level of support for the technological infrastructure of the proposal, but does not address on-going support for students and parents, this criterion was scored in the high range with 8 points.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has made plans for formative and summative evaluations of the project.

The applicant has made some tentative steps toward evaluation. The technology support personnel, teaching and learning coaches, career coaches, and the TECH ED project manager will communicate on a regular basis. The latter in turn will update the district administrative team and school board. Surveys of staff, students, and parents will be conducted each year of the grant to measure effectiveness of the project. A website will be maintained to communicate project updates to the public. However, more details are needed for the improvement process to be considered thorough and comprehensive.

The proposal has not included all parts of a high quality plan for continuous improvement. Although personnel are identified who will meet on a regular basis, no specific timelines, deliverables, or specific activities are described. More details are needed to demonstrate survey content, to describe website features, and to illustrate how surveys will be implemented and how evaluations will impact classroom practice.

Because the applicant has provided for annual evaluations of the project, but has not included all aspects of a high quality plan for continuous improvement, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 5 points.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has made plans to communicate updates to the public.

The district will create a website to communicate project goals and processes. There will be a public poll section on the website. Other media methods such as videos, newspapers and Twitter will be used to spread news by the district's media coordinator.

The proposal has not included all parts of a high quality plan for ongoing communication. Although the responsible party is

identified who will communicate news, it is not clear who will maintain the new website. No specific timelines, deliverables, or specific activities are described. No specifics are given about who will monitor the public poll, or how the results of the poll will impact the project's implementation.

Because the applicant has provided for ongoing communication of the project, but has not included all aspects of a high quality plan for engagement of stakeholders, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 2 points.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included multiple goals for each grade level in section E3.

The LEA has five goals for primary, four goals for middle school, and five goals for high school. The goals fit the criterion description in this section, so that there were goals in grades PreK-3 for academic and non-academic measures; goals for grades 4-8 related to college and career readiness, academics, and positive behaviors; as well as measures for high school in the areas of college readiness, completion of the FAFSA, Advanced Placement coursework, and positive behaviors.

A ten percent increase in performance on the state's kindergarten readiness appears to be an ambitious yet achievable target. Similarly, the target for improvement in middle school math and reading (5% per year) is also achievable. Data for subgroups by number and percentage of total population could be found in the school report card in the appendix. Although performance by subgroup was provided in the appendix, goals per subgroup were not listed in the proposal.

Across all grade levels, a goal is to have an increase of 15% in positive behaviors. For primary, the targets include increasing by 10% the number of students who are served by effective and highly effective teachers. An increase in students who complete the FAFSA is a goal for high school. However, baseline information is missing for some of these targets, so that it is difficult to judge if a ten percent increase is ambitious or achievable.

Furthermore, no rationale is given for the selection of the measurements, nor is a theory of action/theory of change provided. No details are provided as to how the LEA will review or adapt if the targets are not met.

While the LEA has provided targets in the required areas, it has not indicated crucial baseline data, nor included details how the measures were selected or how the district will respond if targets are unmet. Therefore this criterion was scored in the medium range with 2 points.

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

The LEA contemplates assessing the effectiveness of the proposal with an annual survey of stakeholders.

The district will continue to evaluate professional development using the new state provided CIITS tool. Educators, students, and parents will be surveyed to assess the effectiveness of the TECH ED program. The LEA will monitor student assessment data.

The proposal does not include elements of a high quality plan of evaluation. Key goals, specific activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible are left unspecified.

Because the proposal has an evaluation plan that is missing specifics such as responsible parties, this criterion was scored in the medium range with 2 points.

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 has produced a thorough budget that reflects an emphasis on the technological nature of the proposal.

The LEA distinguishes between RTTD funds and local funds, as evidenced by the budget narrative. The budget's emphasis on technology is reasonable, given the technological focus of the plan. Abundant funding is provided for recording software and tools to allow for blended learning.

However, no indication of the district's present level of computer accessibility/functionality for students or teachers is given, although 1124 teacher computers are available, as are 3811 student computers, as noted in the included district technology plan. It is unclear what will happen to the current computers, as there are 1124 teacher computers for 1074 educators impacted by the proposal. The proposal does not provide a reason to supply each educator with both an iPad and a laptop. This is not parallel to the purchase of student devices, which are only iPads. Furthermore, wireless and cable expenditures are both included in the budget, with no rationale why cables and data drops are needed if all devices that are purchased are mobile. Besides access points, bandwidth will be a crucial issue once 18,023 more devices begin to compete for connectivity.

Although the success of the proposal depends on the improvement of teaching, instructional software and professional development are small portions of the plan.

As the applicant has provided a detailed budget that partially addresses the technological infrastructure, but does not substantiate large portions of the total cost, this criterion was scored in the low range with 2 points.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has noted the durability of the devices and the effectiveness of the professional development as reasons for the project's sustainability.

Much of the budget is focused on the one-time purchase of electronic devices. The district contemplates replacing the iPads through the budgets of each school.

There is no high quality plan for the sustainability of the project. There are no goals, timelines, deliverables, or parties responsible.

No funds have been contemplated for personnel or processes that will be required to monitor, track, and replace more than 18,000 devices bought with federal funds. No additional professional education is considered beyond the life of the grant or extending training to new staff. No assessment of the project beyond the life of the grant has been scheduled.

Because of the lack of a high quality plan for sustainability, this criterion was scored in the low range, with 1 point.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This competitive preference priority was not addressed by the applicant. It was thus scored in the low range with 0 points.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has addressed in part how it will build on the four core areas to meet this absolute priority.

The LEA, in addition to signing and affirming the assurance areas, has described the teacher and principal evaluation system that is based on individual student performance and growth, as evidenced by the use of the CIITS state system, which matches students to teachers. The applicant is from a Common Core state, and the state monitors college and career readiness, as shown in the enclosed district report card.

The proposal is focused on personalization of learning by using personal digital devices for all students. The applicant has presented evidence that the plan will accelerate student achievement and deepen learning, particularly at the high school

level and that professional development will improve teaching.

However, targeted interventions and activities are not directed at high need students, so it is not clear if academic gaps will be decreased. Specific plans are not given related to how more teachers will become highly effective so that they will have enhanced impacts on learning. Overall, the majority of benefits fall to secondary students, with little emphasis on younger students. In summary, the three main goals of the proposal do not have specific activities linked to them to form a coherent, comprehensive plan.

Because the district has only partially addressed how it will build on the assurance areas, this criterion was scored as not met.

Total	210	102
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0203KY-4 for Kenton County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

According to the descriptions included in the application this district is already implementing forward-thinking and innovative strategies designed to increase student achievement. They have formed "...Academies of Innovation and Technology", been recipients of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants, received "significant commitment of resources and personnel by the...Board of Education". They are in their 3rd year of implementation with the "Springboard curriculum".

The district has adopted the Kentucky Common Core State Standards and are implementing them across the district.

Data systems are already in place through the use of state and national test scores. The district also includes classroom level assessments. Teachers are able to develop their own standards-based lessons and create assessments tied to those lessons.

The district goals mentioned in the vision statement (all students will perform at or above grade level, all professional practices will be based on a common understanding of quality instruction and best practices, all students 4th grade and above will participate in at least one activity) are vague and will be difficult to assess without further description and collaboration. It was not clear in the description how these goals are communicated to students and parents, how they are monitored (outside of the state assessment) and how the vision of the 21st century classroom described would improve student achievement.

There is a clear description of what the classroom experience would be with students relying solely on their electronic devices, teachers linking lessons to on-line platforms throughout instruction and students sharing their work with all of their classmates simultaneously. The question remains, will these innovations result in increased student performance or provide an additional resources for struggling students.

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

In reading the paragraph accompanied with the implementation plan this reviewer did not see the details that spoke to the **process** used by the district in making the decision to have this be a district-wide initiative.

A list of all participating schools by grade band, number of students, level of participation for each school (100% for all schools),

This reviewer did not see the details included in the narrative that spoke to the process used to determine that the entire district would participate in the initiatives. Though there are many schools listed, each school has its own strengths and challenges. Acknowledging this would be helpful for each school culture.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This section has a narrative including a description of some of the past "successful reform initiatives" already in place in the district. There was no data to substantiate the claims of success included in this section. For example, the narrative reports there were classrooms in the district who used the "1:1 iPad" strategies proposed in this grant application. They are reported to have had enough success that additional classrooms were added in subsequent years. The inclusion of the data in the application would have provided significant evidence that the proposal has been successful and should be expanded throughout the district.

The goals listed and the professional practice that would help the district provide reform and change were not clearly outlined in this section.

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

According to the description and data tables included in the application, the district is poised for success in student achievement as measured by the state summative assessment. The baseline data as shown on the charts for proficiency targets-*combined* reading and math growth targets, decreasing the achievement gap and graduation-shows an upward trend between school years 2012 and 2013. Disaggregated data was not included-i.e. achievement for separate reading and math scores, a breakdown of scores by grade. With the data shown in this area of the proposal it is difficult to determine where the needs are and whether the district team considered the needs of specific student groups as they were formulating the plan for this grant. Because there is no additional information or data about the impact of the TECH-ED (Technology Enhanced Classrooms Heightened Educational Development) as piloted by other classrooms it is difficult to speculate the *likely hood* that improved student learning will increase based upon the implementation of technology-based classrooms.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

According to narratives contained in sections (A)(1) and (A)(3) the district has had success in obtaining funding for and implementing successful programs to raise student achievement. In this question the applicant is required to have "demonstrated evidence of-"

Some innovations described included:

- KCS D being named "an Exemplar School District by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills
- Participation in "Districts of Innovation for the past 3 years
- High school principals participation in "Next Gen meetings"-a fat not mentioned in the letters from either principal, both of which are located in the appendix of the application
- Personnel hired through grants to work at integrating technology into instruction

No information about the meaning of "exemplar distinction" was included in the narrative. Elaborating on the significance of the distinction and how that would connect to and enhance the grant proposal would have provided additional evidence of their track record of success.

The narrative also mentions that student data is available to the community through the School Report Card. A copy of the District report card is included in the appendix. The text states the "superintendent regularly challenges" the integration of technology but did not share examples of a district-wide plan or standards used by the district. Though the high school principals have had some exposure to the integration of technology through the "Next Gen" meetings, this information would be a critical component that would help the planning committee to identify skills needed to successfully integrate technology at the classroom level.

There is no evidence contained in the document that explained if and how the information about the district's record of success was made available to parents, community partners or stakeholders.

Evidence of the use of these specific innovations and communications coupled with evidence that they have been instrumental in raising achievement would have resulted in a higher score.

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

The narrative includes a paragraph description of the process used to inform constituents about the budget and salaries and a single page salary scale is included in the appendix. There is a single sentence referring to the operations manual and district reports. This evidence by itself is insufficient to determine the level of transparency currently provided at the district level and whether the information about the LEA's processes, practices and investments is readily available and accessible to all stakeholders. There is not enough evidence from the single paragraph to determine the effectiveness of this manner of communication and whether this level of access is sufficient to assure a level of transparency and accessibility for all constituents.

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

According to the narrative, shared leadership and School-Based Decision Making is part of an Education Reform Act implemented in 1990. A copy of this House Bill was not included. The narrative speaks of school councils and shared leadership. School councils include parents, teachers and building administrators. Again, there was no evidence of these meetings via sign-in sheets, agendas, etc.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	2
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes a process for engaging stakeholders. Letters of support from the Mayor, state and local politicians, local business partners, PTA members building principals and the community college. Notably there was but one letter from a teacher who was also the President of the Education Association. Unfortunately, this letter was unsigned. Although there is mention of a teacher vote there is no evidence of support from teachers or the bargaining unit. Copies of student survey questions were included but there was no evidence the surveys were completed by students or that their "voice" was considered prior to submission of the grant.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is a sentence in Section (A)(1) that states "scholars who desperately want to learn in a 21st Century Classroom". Although this may be true there is no evidence provided that supports this statement. It calls into question the involvement of students in the process or, at the very least, the involvement of their parents in the area of input. The information in the narrative makes a clear that teachers and students are sufficiently prepared for the learning necessary to successfully provide a "personalized sequence of instructional content" but no evidence is provided from the two classrooms that have

already piloted the program in the district. This vital information would have an impact on the potential success or failure of the proposed project and would provide baseline data for other classes to begin implementation of the technology programs proposed.

There is not specific information given to demonstrate how teachers will receive specific feedback. The coaches would need to be highly trained both in the technology as well as in the appropriate, differentiated professional development for each teacher.

The proposal has a goal of using blended learning, enhanced curricular supports, collaboration are proposed to be mechanisms to provide training and supports to teachers who will provide that support to students. College and career coaches will be used as an innovation to ensure students are given the best chance for success in the real world. The information in the document does not elaborate on how these models will look and how their use will improve student achievement.

The narrative uses very generalized terms such as "improved career skills", and "students will have the world at their fingertips" without specific information of how that will look. One of the stated goals is to ensure schools "safe, fun and friendly". While this approach may reach some of the students it may not meet the needs of students who are possibly disenfranchised from the educational process.

Very little information is provided to address the needs of students who fall into established "sub-groups". Critical data is missing that would assist in determining the readiness for an undertaking of this magnitude.

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

With the district's record of achievement and designation as an "Exemplary School District" teachers and administrators will need to shift their thinking and begin from a place of true learning. According to the plan, there is little specific training other than to make "available 6 paid hours of PD each year" to ensure transition from traditional to digital classrooms. Teachers will have a "choice" in using Edmodo as a communication platform-what about teachers who do not choose this method? How will learning be consistent for the students across the district?

Professional Development will be provided by teaching and learning coaches, providing teachers with job-embedded opportunities for success. This section also included a list of proposed professional development that will be made available to teachers. It was unclear who would be responsible for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the professional development on an on-going basis.

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 description listed in the narratives specifically addresses the organizational and school leadership structures in the district. There is a vague reference to the availability of classroom assessment tools and how they will be used in the classroom. There is no evidence this information will give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery based on the goals listed in the plan.

The policies and infrastructures students and staff are listed in the narrative but are unclear. For example, the narrative speaks to the autonomy and flexibility of school leadership teams but does not provide a framework of the district-wide expectations to be implemented as a result of the grant. The narrative states the district reserves the right to adjust the number of iPads at each school but does not include the criteria that will be used should the district need to make the adjustments. The plan for the teacher's creation and use of resources within CIITS (Continuous Improvement Instructional Technology System) was also unclear. It was difficult to draw a link between the resources and student achievement.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides information about the data system to be used that is used by the entire state. Because of the scope of the grant application, every student will have access to the tools and learning resources both in and out of

school. There is no information provided that would address students or families who are unfamiliar with the technology or lack the resources to have access to the internet outside of school. There is no evidence provided in the grant document that would provide for increased student achievement and personalized to the support and resources requested through the grant.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	1
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The application speaks of a "formative evaluation" to be given at the end of each year of the grant and a "summative evaluation" at the conclusion of the grant with "impact checks along the way". The information provided was insufficient to determine the scope and success of each of any measures and provided no documentation of its efforts to provide a "rigorous continuous improvement process ".		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The communication plan is vague and primarily relies on a TECH ED web page yet to be developed. No information was provided that would address the needs of those who are not connected to or comfortable with electronic media and communication. The narrative mentions that "success stories, news stories and videos" would be shared in newspapers and on cable channels.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: This section includes broad goals for a limited group of students. No subgroups were included. There was no rationale for selecting the measure other than those being what the state was using. There was no information about how the measure would be reviewed in order to make improvements over time. Statements were pasted over the graphs with the statement "Baseline data will be collected in August 2014..." There is no evidence the goals provided are achievable or have been sufficiently evaluated by the district or grant writers.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: In this section the district describes how they are currently evaluating professional development activities but is not specific about how the data is collected and used. According to the document there will be a heavy reliance on surveys taken by both staff, students, and parents. Reading the narrative, it is unclear how these surveys will accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the grant funded activities. Criteria and percentages are not included. There was no evidence of the plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The narrative provided does not contain sufficient information to determine where the funds will be allocated. There is no "thoughtful rationale" that would support the investment of this significant amount of money. It is unclear if there are additional funds that will be used/available for the grant period. There is a focus on the expansion of the 21st Century Teaching and Learning for middle year students. Given the success		

of the implementation indicated by the district's designation as an Exemplar School District, the use of RTT-D funds to expand an already existing and successful program. However, looking back at section B-1 there is not enough data to determine what caused the district to obtain that distinction.

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

10

1

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Based on the information contained in the grant application, the information fails to rise to the level of a "high-quality plan". More specific information is needed for the purposes of evaluation, specific data/evaluation points as well as the availability of additional funds. More information is needed to support the implementation of a program that will specifically encourage personalized learning for the students and provide a way for teachers, students, administrators and stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the project, make changes/adjustments then move forward.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

According to the descriptions included in the application this district is already implementing forward-thinking and innovative strategies designed to increase student achievement. They have formed "...Academies of Innovation and Technology", been recipients of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants, received "significant commitment of resources and personnel by the...Board of Education". They are in their 3rd year of implementation with the "Springboard curriculum".

The application includes information and letters of support from stakeholders but does not provide a clear link how these stake holders will provide the specific and targeted support in conjunction to the RTT-D goals in order to make this plan sustainable and effective for students.

There is insufficient assessment data included. It is unclear that the district has taken the time to formally analyze the data provided in the charts to make a meaningful determination of the needs of the district's students and differentiate the project according to those needs.

The application failed to provide data for sub-groups and specifically target the data in order to make meaningful plans to personalize the learning for students.

Based on the success listed in the grant narrative, the district should have information to help them target the need for the funds and be more specific about how the funds will be dispersed, monitored and how success will be measured.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Based on the selection criteria the district has failed to provide enough information that would sufficiently address questions posed in the application. They could not show evidence that through the purchase of the technology and professional development students learning would be personalized and student achievement would improve.

Many sections of the plan speak favorably of the district's successful instruction and rigor. The fact they have been the recipient of awards and grants in the past has allowed the district to be more innovative in their approach to instructing learners.

There was not enough evidence contained in the plan to coherently link the purchase of portable electronic devices, tablets and upgrading infrastructure to the deepening of student learning. The charts and graphs included contained incomplete student achievement data which made it difficult to see how the plan would work to improve academic performance.

Total	210	51
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