



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0049NC-2 for Lenoir County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant clearly explained its comprehensive and coherent reform vision. Lenoir County Schools is calling its proposal "Project APEX: Achievement through Personalized Education eXperiences."</p> <p>a) The applicant demonstrated how the proposal builds on the four core educational assurances: they've implemented the common core state standards, have the technology infrastructure to implement Home Base which is the state's new interoperability data system, are participating in the state's Education Evaluation System and are turning around three identified lowest performing schools.</p> <p>b) The vision is a systemic shift from a teacher-led to a student-driven approach to learning. This will be accomplished by creating magnet themed schools, developing career- and college-ready exploration programs, providing 1:1 personalized learning technology, and building on North Carolina's Race to the Top initiative around the core educational assurance areas. In this reviewer's professional judgment, the applicant articulated a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support based on student academic interests.</p> <p>c) The applicant describes the classroom experience clearly. Those experiences will lead to the district reaching its vision of personalized learning environments. Students will be pursuing their individual interests and career aspirations. They will have Personalized Education Plans that will guide them, and provide data to measure their own progress. Educators will continually refer to student data and adjust instruction as needed.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant explained its approach to implementation of the reform proposal in Section (A)(2) clearly. The Race to the Top District funding will be used to implement the first phase of the district's reform efforts. The grant proposal's Project APEX will infuse magnet themes across all K-8 schools and launch a 1:1 personalized learning technology devices for all K-12 students.</p> <p>a) The applicant did not explain the process it used to select schools to participate. The district is including all seventeen elementary, middle and high schools and all 9222 students in K-12 in the proposal. There will be 645 educators participating. The pre-school center is the only school excluded. The preschool will be included in a later phase of the district's reform efforts. The schools collectively meet the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>b) The applicant provided the list of schools and completed Table A2 with each schools' demographics.</p> <p>c) Table A2 provided the number of participating students who are from low-income families and the number of students who are high-need students. It also included the number of participating educators. It is not clear if this number includes every educator other than pre-school staff in the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant conducted a 14 month planning process to develop its reform vision and implementation plan which will result in all schools and K-12 students participating in the proposal. The proposal is designed to align with the State's initiative, <i>Career and College Ready: Ready, Set, Go!</i>, which is to increase student achievement, close achievement gaps and increase graduation rates.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Since the proposal includes all elementary, middle and high schools and all students within those schools, it is already reaching district wide. The applicant believes that through Project APEX a "comprehensive and deep paradigm shift" will occur. "Students will succeed when they are given the opportunity to make meaningful choices about their education."</p> <p>The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan that includes all the required components: key goals, activities, rational, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing the activities. The applicant did provide the district's vision for district-wide reform of which the RTTD proposal is Phase 1 of the reform effort. While the three components of the proposal are being implemented as Phase 1 of the district-wide reform efforts, the district will be planning Phase 2 which includes early childhood and high school career academies. As a result, the two implementation phases will touch every student and school in the district with meaningful reform.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's vision is likely to result in increased student learning and performance and increased equity based on the goals, activities, benchmarks and deliverables identified in Section (A)(4). The applicant presented a thorough action plan in Table A(4). The action plan addressed each of the goals and what activities would be implemented to reach those goals.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant completed Tables (A)(4)(a) - (d). The goals in these tables seem realistic and achievable. It is not clear how some of the goals were set so it's difficult to know if they are equal to or exceed the State's targets regarding performance on summative assessments for proficiency status and growth. It is appreciated that the applicant provided 2011-2012 data since the 2012-2013 is not yet available.</p> <p>Having the data disaggregated by subgroups was informative. The graduation rate goals for the Limited English Proficient group are troubling. The baseline data is 64.3% but the goal by the end of the grant is 59.1%. In addition, there is such a gap in expectations regarding graduation rates with an overall goal in 2016-2017 of 86.2% but at 60.8% and 70.7% for Limited English Proficient and Students with Disabilities.</p>		

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>(a) The applicant provided numerous data sets to illustrate the success in the past four years in advancing student learning and increasing equity in learning. The data show positive outcomes overall. The graduation data shows all high schools except the alternative school increasing graduation rates each year. The End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests overall showed improvement. Grades 3-8 were more consistent in improving annually. The high school results were up one year and down another. Some schools showed more improvement than others. The applicant mentioned that students with disabilities had made significant gains in their performance. In addition, the applicant provided data on dropout rates, enrollment and certificates in the International Baccalaureate Programme and student behavior. Overall, the district demonstrated a clear record of success.</p> <p>(b) The applicant included a table which displayed the End-of-Grade test results of the lowest achieving schools. Only two years of data was provided; however, it shows all 3 schools improving in reading. Two schools improved in math. The improvement in these schools is good and hopefully will continue. This data shows that the district has a record of success.</p> <p>(c) The applicant stated that there is "a multifaceted strategy for informing students, parents and educators about both individual progress and the school system's vision and activities." Several ways in which the data are shared was provided. It was not clear, however, if the way in which information was provided helped inform and improve participation, instruction and services. This lack of clarity resulted in a decrease in points.</p> <p>The applicant did share how formative data will be made available through the State's new web-based data system "Home Base." This will increase accessibility of data and information in a timely manner to students, parents and educators.</p>		

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not provide the actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support and school administration as requested in the Race to the Top District-Level application. These were to be provided by each school and show actual expenditures rather than what is budgeted. Currently, this district makes salaries and expenditures information available when requested.</p> <p>In the future, the district will be posting budgets for the district and schools. The applicant included the 2013-2014 district budget in the Appendix. The applicant did not include school-level expenditures.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant believes it has sufficient autonomy for the personalized learning environments in the proposal to be implemented. A state statute (N.C. General Statute 1152-105.41) gives districts legal authority to individualize learning for students. That statute applies to at-risk students; however, the district believes it can apply to all students. The applicant also says there is "no legislation that would prevent districts from developing the kind of personalized learning environments as proposed in its APEX reform plan. There is no definitive evidence that the state statute may be applied to all students.</p> <p>The conditions for success were also described. They include leadership that utilizes strategic planning which is supported by the Board of Education. The district received funds as a participant in the State's Race-to-the-Top grant. This helped the district develop a plan that centered on educator effectiveness, lowest performing schools, standards and assessments and data analysis. The new proposal builds on those initiatives.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided numerous letters of support for the proposal. Included in the letters of support from each school in the district are the signatures of those staff members who agree with the proposal. There was support of 82% of the staff. There had been two meetings explaining the APEX proposal to teachers. It was not clear if they had any opportunity to provide input and feedback.</p> <p>The APEX Project Planning Process was outlined in Section (A)(2). Principals and senior staff were involved throughout the process. A School System Improvement Task Force was created last year to develop the district's reform vision. The work of Task Force led to the desire for themed K-8 schools and 1:1 technology; this became the basis for the RTTD proposal.</p> <p>Students were not identified as being part of the planning process. In addition, involvement of parents and community appears to have limited.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. In addition to responding to each of the criteria in Section (C)(1), the applicant provided a table with the APEX Student Learning Action Plan. It included the district goals, key activities, rationale, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties as it relates to Section (C)(1). In this reviewer's professional judgment, this applicant's approach to learning, as detailed in (C)(1), will engage and empower all learners. Their high-quality plan will lead to improved learning.</p> <p>(a)(i) It's a strength of this plan that the applicant recognizes students as early as kindergarten should "think about education as a process of investigating options, making choices, setting goals, and mastering steps towards their future college and career opportunities" rather than waiting until students are in middle school or high school. To help students understand that learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, the plan includes choice of themed schools in K-8, Individual Learning Pathways and Personalized Education Plans, access to data systems, career exploration, both</p>		

formative and summative assessments, and access to technology devices.

(a)(ii) The applicant explained that the 1:1 Technology Initiative will provide access to Home Base to every student and parent. This interoperable data system will include student's Individual Learning Pathways. Through this system students, parents and educators will be able to track progress on goals and achieving mastery of college- and career-ready standards. The applicant's response to criteria (a)(ii) is not complete. It addresses how students will track their progress but it does not specify how students will identify their goals and structure their learning to achieve their goals.

(a)(iii) Students in K-8 will be involved in deeper learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant believes that having four magnet themes schools available from which to choose and allowing students with parents to select the themed school in which they have an interest will contribute to deeper learning. The applicant mentions that the technology initiative will provide opportunities to extend learning and deepen investigation around areas of interest. Other than the technology initiative, there was nothing specific regarding high school students. The concept of themed schools does have the potential to involve students in deeper learning experiences; however, it will depend on how the educators structure the lessons and use technology for exploration.

(a)(iv) It is interesting that the applicant views the themed schools, offering students educational choice, will provide shifts in student populations which will create greater diversity. There may be a shift in demographics. The applicant, however, did not really address criteria (a)(iv) in which all students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(a)(v) The applicant explained how the Project APEX is designed to encourage mastery through student-identified goals drive learning, continual monitoring progress toward mastery, customized learning resources and project-based learning. The applicant mentioned that project-based learning will foster skills such as communication, teamwork and creativity. It appears, however, that all skills and traits mentioned in criteria (v) have not been purposefully incorporated into the plan yet.

(b)(i) The applicant provided compelling information that each student will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to help the student achieve his or her individual learning goals. This will be accomplished through the Individual Learning Pathways and Personalized Education Plans as described in the proposal.

(b)(ii) The applicant indicates that students will have access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments with the restructuring of K-8 education into themed schools. In addition, team-oriented and project-based learning environments along with highly personalized instruction based on Individual Learning Pathways and Personalized Education Plans will have a variety of instructional approaches and environments. What the applicant does not explain is how it will determine if an approach or environment is of high-quality. Students may have access to a variety of approaches but it's important to know if they are high-quality.

(b)(iii) It is a strength of the proposal that the themed units will be developed using the Common Core and Essential Standards. This ensures that students have access to content aligned with the college-and career-ready standards. In addition, the data system Home Base has a platform for educator to share evidence-based and standards-oriented best practices, lesson plans and learning resources. The 1:1 technology provides the vehicle for student to access the content and resources.

(b)(iv) Throughout the proposal, the applicant has provided information regarding students having access to their own data to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards. The applicant didn't mention how frequently data is updated in the system but did say it was ongoing and regular. The Home Base data system is where the data is uploaded and accessed by students, educators and parents. The Home Base system also is where personalized learning recommendations along with identified supports and instructional approaches are located. The use of Home Base is definitely a strength of this proposal.

(b)(v) The applicant indicates that high-need students will continue to have traditional accommodations available to them. The applicant claims there will be more accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students as a result of the reform initiative. For example, with the technology initiative and the use of Home Base data system, teachers will be able to develop formative assessments to determine effectiveness of learning strategies and adjust accordingly for high-need students. The applicant did not explain what the additional accommodations might be.

(c) The applicant has mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students so they can use the tools and resources to track and manage their learning. There will be training in the classrooms by technology facilitators for K-8 students and online modules for grades 9-12. Students will receive support from teachers who have been trained. Having online modules available is good in that the training can be available at any time and reviewed numerous times if needed.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)**20****15****(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides a high-quality plan for teaching and leading. It focuses on shifting from teacher-led to student-driven learning. The teachers will be facilitators in guiding students in developing Individualized Learning Pathways and Personalized Education Plans. Having Home Base as the interoperable data system and 1:1 technology will enhance the teachers' and leaders' abilities to analyze and use data and access digital learning resources.

The applicant was not as thorough in responding to some of the individual criteria in (C)(2) as they were in other sections of the application. The reviewer considered information that was provided in other parts of the application in judging the criteria in (C)(2). The applicant did provide a table: Section C2: APEX Teaching and Leading Action Plan which included district goals, activities, rational timelines, deliverable, and responsible parties. This table along with the responses to the individual criteria builds the high-quality plan for teaching and leading.

(a)(i) The applicant provided little information with this criteria regarding the training that teachers will engage in to support their effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and to help students graduate on time and college-and career-ready. The only mention of training in the applicant's response related to developing the themed units. Teachers will be working in teams to develop the curricular units for each theme. It's not clear what other professional development may be provided. There is a list of some professional development in (c)(ii).

(a)(ii) The response to (a)(ii) is vague. The applicant believes that teachers will facilitate learning through flexible formats, use Home Base system for sharing best practices, create interdisciplinary learning communities within themed schools. It is not clear that educators are in professional teams or communities that support their capacity to adapt content and instruction, provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their need, inters and learning approaches.

(a)(iii) As mentioned throughout the proposal, students and educators will access the interoperable data system Home Base for the data on student progress. The applicant does not clarify how educators use the student progress information/data for improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

(a)(iv) Educators will develop professional development plans based on their evaluation information gathered through the state's teacher and principal evaluation system. For improvement, there are professional development modules that can be access via Home Base that educators use. The applicant did not mention what supports and interventions are available. The frequency of feedback on individual and collective effectiveness based on the teacher and principal evaluation systems was not provided.

(b)(i) The applicant mentions that educators have access to Home Base data system which will help them identify optimal learning approaches. In Section (C)(1), it was mentioned that educators had access to formative assessments which would help them determine if particular strategies or approaches to learning worked or needed adjusting.

(b)(ii) and (b)(iii) The applicant states that teachers will share high quality learning resources via Home Base. It also will be how teachers share and evaluate strategies. No further information was provided in these particular sections. In other sections of the proposal- (B)(1), (C)(1)(a)(ii), and (C)(2)(a)(1)- additional information regarding the use of the Home Base data system for sharing best practices, lesson plans, materials and learning resources is provided. As a result of information throughout the proposal, there is sufficient evidence showing that educators have access to learning resources and processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches.

(c)(i) School leaders have access to information from the state's teacher and principal evaluation system and the Home Base system. The applicant believes this helps build a culture of continual improvement. Using that information and the school improvement plans, school leaders can assess and take steps to improve educator effectiveness and school culture and climate through continuous school improvement.. Having school leaders use the data in the Home Base system and the school improvement plans of increase teacher effectiveness and continuous school improvement. is good to do.

(c)(ii) It was mentioned in (c)(i) that administrators are members of professional learning communities. This means they will

be involved with training, monitoring and evaluating for school improvement. In (c)(ii) the applicant provided a listing of professional development opportunities that are primarily for teachers. It's not clear if there is additional training for leaders.

(d) The applicant did not respond specifically to (d). It was mentioned in (c)(ii) that the district has graduated bonuses for teachers of math, science, and students with disabilities. It does not mention anything about effective and highly effective teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant stated that the policies, practices and rules needed to facilitate individualized learning environments were already in place. Additional clarity on what these policies, practices and rules are would have been helpful.

(a) The applicant explained how the central office is organized to lead the implementation of the proposal. Within the central office, different individuals will have specific responsibilities for the implementation of the proposal. Additional staff, i.e. curriculum technology facilitators and data analysis lead, will be guided by and supervised by the central office personnel.

(b) It appears that principals and School Improvement Teams have sufficient autonomy over instructional time, day-to-day curriculum, allocating staff resources and enrichment and remediation programs to make any adjustments necessary for successful implementation of the proposal. They do not; however, have autonomy over school calendars.

(c) The applicant shared various means by which students currently show mastery and earn credit based on that mastery. Most of the means mentioned in the proposal are not about mastering topics and earning credits but rather placement, advancement or additional opportunities. Time does not seem to be a factor. For example, elementary students may achieve grade acceleration through demonstration of high levels of proficiency beyond grade level. Benchmark assessment data and classroom performance determine remediation and enrichment groups at the middle school. High school students earn extra credit outside the school day through online or virtual high school coursework.

Opportunities for demonstrating mastery will be expanded as part of the proposal. These opportunities could provide avenues for demonstrating mastery but it is not apparent in the table. For example, "software programs individualize learning paths in reading, math and science" is listed in the expanded opportunities. It isn't clear how the student will use his or her individualized learning path to demonstrate mastery. Students will have access to a range of technological tools which could provide more opportunities and methods for showing mastery. The district believes a promising strategy for demonstrating mastery is project-based learning. Having project-based learning does not necessarily mean a demonstration of mastery but it does have the potential depending on how the educators design the projects.

(d) The applicant's response to (d) is that the district developed district-wide instructional units that promote multiple ways to express learning. The district believes that the 1:1 technology initiative will provide more opportunities for students to express mastery. The applicant did not explain or support this statement. Overall, the applicant did not provide a sufficient explanation of how students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways

(e) All students will have access to learning resources and instructional practices. The selection of a particular magnet theme, development of individual learning plans and 1:1 technology helps with access and adaptability. English Learners, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students will have the same access to themed schools and the technology as do all other students in the district.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal demonstrated that the district has practices, policies and rules that will facilitate personalized learning.

a) All students K-8 have equal access to school choice. Students, regardless of income, will choose which themed school they wish to attend. The 1:1 technology initiative gives each student equal access to technology devices. These devices may be used at both school and home. The applicant did not mention any strategies to ensure that low-income students use of technology devices is not limited due to lack of access to Internet in the home. In addition, school choice generally

includes transportation which may be an issue for economically disadvantaged students. These two issues did not affect the points in this section; however, they are items the applicant should consider when implementing the proposal.

b) Technical supports are available to educators and students at school. The applicant did not mention the availability of any technical support outside of school. The only technical support to parents will be technology workshops conducted by ESL teachers. Additional personal hired through the grant will provide support as needed. This includes curriculum technology facilitators working with each school. One would expect there to be more avenues of technical support as a result of having a 1:1 technology initiative.

c) The applicant responded to this criteria as if it applied to teachers; this criteria is about parents and students. The applicant did not address how information technology systems allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.

d) This proposal builds on the interoperable data system created by the state. The applicant will expand the implementation of Home Base as the student information system. It allows parent, students and educators access to data and learning tools. This system will include formative assessment tools, lesson plans and resource materials. Individualized Learning Plans will be traced through Home Base. This provides ready access to information. Utilizing the state's Home Base data system is an asset of the proposal as Home Base provides interoperability.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant indicated there are existing structures that support continuous improvement efforts and these would be augmented to increase communication. These structures and improvements; however, were not explained clearly.</p> <p>Within (E)(1) there is the APEX Data Tracking and Evaluation Plan table that shows what the data tracking activities, timelines, deliverables/outcomes, persons responsible and how it will be reported. The timeline has data tracking/evaluation activities occurring weekly, monthly, mid-year and end-of the-year. This shows that the applicant is looking at continuous improvement throughout the grant cycle and not just waiting to do a summative evaluation. Publicly sharing the information on the quality of its investments is vague.</p> <p>The plan is not rigorous as no explanation for the "opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant" was found.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provided a listing of current communication mechanisms that are two-way communications. It is not clear how these will be used in relationship to the grant activities. There is a four-step process for acting on stakeholder feedback. There was lack of clarity on who the external stakeholders were. A high-quality plan was not provided in response to this item. Persons responsible for specific communication and engagement activities were not provided.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>a) The applicant provided a rationale and relevance for each selected performance measure. The performance measures are in grade levels: K-3, 4-8 and 9-12. The applicant has more performance measures than the requested 12-14. This is a result of having measures for 4th grade and similar measures for 8th grade. This did not cause any reduction in points awarded for this section.</p> <p>The applicant states that teachers and principals in North Carolina will not receive a status of <u>effective</u> or <u>highly effective</u> until 2016-2017. This is part of the state's waiver and RTTT plan. As a result, the two required measures on effective and highly effective teachers are not included. This does not impact the points awarded for this section.</p> <p>The annual targets for each measure are provided. They appear to be rigorous--ambitious yet achievable. It is appreciated that the applicant provided the measures by school and student groups where appropriate.</p>		

b) The applicant did not explain how the measures 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.

c) Annually, a leadership team will review each performance measure and outcome to ensure it is sufficient to gauge implementation progress. It's interesting that the external evaluator is not part of this review team. The team includes the Project APEX coordinator, the superintendent, associate superintendent and executive director of operations.

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

According to the applicant, evaluating the effectiveness of investments is the responsibility of the APEX Project Coordinator and the Data Analysis Project Lead. There will be ongoing "return on investment" analysis. The applicant did not describe or explain how they will analyze returns on investments. No high-quality plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments was provided.

The applicant identified two areas in which they will look for improvements in investments: 1) improved recruitment and retention of high quality professional educators and 2) continuation of growth in high school graduation rate.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed projects. They are seeking \$19,999,908 to implement Project APEX. This project will be funded primarily through the federal Race to the Top District-Level funds. Approximately \$16 M or 84% of the RTTD funds will be spent on the 1:1 Technology Initiative K-12. Over \$11 M of the \$16 M will be spent on the technology devices. Since the vehicle for helping to create personalized learning environments and to have ready access to data is a handheld device or laptop in every student and teachers possession, the budget amount is reasonable. Funds will also be used for the professional development associated with the 1:1 technology project and the themed schools. In order to transform the K-8 schools into themed schools, time is needed to develop the units for each theme. Staff will be paid stipends for the time spent on developing the themes. Again, the amount requested in the budget is reasonable and seems sufficient.

The items that are one-time investments include computers, printers, professional development consultant and an outside evaluator. The hardware for the 1:1 technology initiative is considered ongoing. These are appropriate classifications of investments.

The applicant presented thorough budget narratives and tables for each project. There are four: Leadership and Sustainability, 1:1 Technology Initiative; Themed Schools and Career and College Expectations.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This applicant has a plan for the sustainability of the proposal's goals. The applicant states that once all the projects are fully implemented, the district "will be able to sustain all the tenets of the programs at the highest level with a minimum of continued investment." It will take approximately \$2.8M annually to sustain the projects.

The themed K-8 schools and the technology will be in place. The district will establish a "Themed Schools Vanguard" to ensure that new teachers to the themed schools are on board and that exiting units are revised and updated and new ones are created. The technology department will be able to manage the technology components. The district will use a variety of resources to continue the work around career and college ready exploration including a Gear-Up grant.

There will be a Sustainability Committee created at the beginning of the grant. Their charge is to produce the specific sustainability plan by July 2015. The project leads are part of this committee. The plan this committee develops is to include an analysis of the core budgetary elements of each project to determine if post-award funding is needed. The plan

is also to prioritize core budget elements and consider revenue streams and potential revenue streams. The specifics for evaluating the improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget were not specified.

The applicant mentions the annual budget process with the Lenoir County Commissioners; otherwise, there is no mention of support from state and local leaders.

One area that raised a red flag for the reviewer relates to the use of the indirect cost funds. The applicant states that they will "bank half of these funds for the purpose of sustaining initiatives after the grant." This may be in violation of the federal Cash Management law as there is a restriction that funds may be drawn for reimbursement or for immediate expenses. There is a limit on the amount of interest that may be earned on federal funds. The US Department of Education will determine if this is an issue.

If the indirect cost funds are not available for sustainability, it could change how sustainability happens.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) The applicant intends to build on and expand current business and community partnerships. These partnerships will enhance the Career and College Exploration focus. District staff will be trained in Habits of Mind framework. Community partners and families will learn about the habits and how to reinforce them at the workplace and home. The partners will help reinforce those habits (soft skills) when connected with students. There are numerous partnerships and for each entity their role and/or contributions are explained. Not all of the partnerships, however, appear to have contributions that relate directly to the grant proposal. For example, sponsoring clothes closets doesn't seem to connect with the proposal.

(2) Six population-level desired results were identified. The applicant has classified the desired results as education, social and emotional, and school to career and college. There were no family and community support results.

(3)(a) The applicant states that the Project APEX Data Analysis Lead will track the indicators. He or she will work with district and school personnel to address needs as determined by data. How the data will be tracked is not provided; the applicant provided who would track the data.

(3)(b) The applicant did not explain how the use of data to track resources to improve results for participating students would happen. It said several specific individuals from the school district would ensure schools have equal access to community partners. There is no connection to improving results or placing a special emphasis on students facing significant challenges.

(3)(c) After the Habits of Mind framework is established in K-8 grade span, the applicant intends to train preschool students and staff. It's not clear when high school personnel will be trained. The district will use in-house train the trainer model in the scaling up process.

(4) The intent of the Competitive Preference Priority is to bring the Habits of Mind framework into the classroom. This applicant's priority is not about integrating education with other services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs. It is about integrating 16 habits, i.e., managing impulsivity and finding humor, into the educational setting which could help with behavioral and social-emotional needs.

(5) In the applicant's response to how the partnership and district would build the capacity of staff of participating students, it seems as though the partners are not really involved. It is the school district that will assess the needs and assets of participating students, identify and inventory needs and assets of school, create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement and evaluate supports, engage parents and families and assess progress. The partnership seems to be very one-sided.

(6) Six performance measures were identified. This reviewer has a concern regarding the performance measures in that

they are not measuring performance. Having all students experience a field trip or career fair or job shadowing is commendable; however, having the targets relate to participation numbers doesn't emphasize the results of those activities.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Project APEX meets Absolute Priority 1. It emphasizes personalized learning environment. The applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. For example, using the state's interoperable data system Home Base, students, parents and educators will have access to data to measure progress and success and to inform instruction and learning. Each student's Personalized Education Plan and Individualized Learning Pathway will be on the Home Base system. The use of the Home Base system with all of the data, resources, plans, etc. is a strength in this proposal. This system, if used as described in the proposal, will contribute to this district having personalized learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools and supports.

Through magnet themed schools, robust career- and college-ready exploration and 1:1 technology initiative, the focus of schooling will shift from teacher led to student centered. Each student will have personalized learning plans and access to their own data. There will be more flexible scheduling to accommodate acceleration or remediation.

This proposal has the potential to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning; increase educator effectiveness; decrease achievement gaps; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	161
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Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0049NC-3 for Lenoir County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has begun implementation of the North Carolina Common Core State Standards, presents data showing that

graduation and college-going rates are increasing, personalizing environment through the development of magnet schools, and improving teacher and principal quality through professional development and an enhanced evaluation system. The proposal includes three schools that have been identified in the lowest five percent of schools in North Carolina. The proposed project also builds upon the state's previous work on implementing a longitudinal data management system with RTTT State funds. The use of this state data system will inform professional development that will help in building a strong, effective staff of teachers and principals.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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

Organizing all elementary and middle schools into the magnet themes places parents and students in charge of choosing their educational direction. The applicant includes a description of the planning that has taken place for more than a year. Schools included in the proposal include 9,222 students. This includes 68.6% of students who come from low income families, which is consistent with the criteria for this section. The proposal also includes professional development for teachers, such as training to increase project-based instruction.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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

The proposal represents Phase One of a plan to transform the LEA. The four project years will lead to themed high school career academies as well as the magnet schools for elementary and middle school students. The incremental nature of the scale up of project activities and management plan also lend themselves to the successful implementation of these reforms in a way that will carry into the future.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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

The applicant includes activities targeted to the levels of performance growth required by the ESEA. Data provided include baseline scores from summative assessments from the 2011-12 school year and growth targets through 2017-18. The targets are rigorous and if reached would close significant gaps that exist among subgroups. The goals also include the increase of high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for all subgroups of students. The logic model included in the proposal shows the connection from goals, to basic activities, to deliverables and responsible parties.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes student data showing how graduation rates, college-going rates, reading and math scores, and high school end-of-course passing rates have improved over the past four years. This shows a track record of continuous improvement. Even the lowest achieving schools have shown growth during this time. Students with disabilities have also shown gains during this time. The web-based data system being developed builds on an existing data management system and will meet the requirements of this section and improve the flow of information to parents. When completed, parents, students, and educators will have more comprehensive data about student skills and greater access to it.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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

The proposal includes a plan to increase transparency from the current state in which patrons can request information, such as teacher salaries, to a searchable online database. This will include all salaries and all non-personnel expenditures as well. However, the described system does not include assurances that expenses will be broken down by the school-level function.

The applicant receives a score in the high range for this section.

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

The LEA demonstrates prior participation in the state RTTT project and statutory evidence of autonomy to implement personalized learning environments described in the project. The applicant states that the legislation enabling such environments requires that learning plans should have parent input and include focused interventions. Evidence provided includes the North Carolina statutes that permit the development of personalized education plans and the use of targeted interventions. These types of instructional priorities are consistent with the support necessary for personalized learning environments to flourish.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a detailed description of the planning process that extends back more than a year. While letters are included showing overwhelming teacher support for the proposed project, the narrative does not include a description of how teachers, parents, community leaders, and businesses were approached for input. This diminishes the impact of the letters of support from these stakeholder groups. Overall, however, the evidence of multiple stakeholder groups supporting the proposed projects is provided by the applicant.

This section scores in the high range of points.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The implementation of Home Base, the district’s interoperable data system, provides the tool that students and parents need to drive individual learning plans (ILPs). Use of home base will also put the state adopted Common Core standards into a usable format for parents. Each of the magnet themes will be geared to deepen areas of existing student interest, which will motivate and engage more students.</p> <p>While activities that will lead to goal-setting and teamwork are also described in the project proposal, there is only minimal mention of how students will experience diversity.</p> <p>Since students in all grades will be able to choose content-themed schools by the end of the project period, they will be able to deliberately pick a personalized sequence of instruction and skill development. The proposal also includes a 1:1 initiative, but the project seems more geared towards allowing students to track progress than access content digitally.</p> <p>The applicant states that the proposed project also includes increased strategies for accommodating high-needs students, but no details are provided to demonstrate this.</p> <p>The applicant’s student learning action plan includes several deliverables suited to assisting students in understanding the tools that will be available. For example, one deliverable includes training on the operation of the Home Base data interoperability system.</p> <p>Having several well-explained strengths and a few minor weaknesses, the applicant receives a score in the high range of points for this section.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Teachers will have time during the early stages of project implementation to collaborate on the development of instructional units that are appropriate to the magnet themes of the individual schools. This time represents authentic professional development and capacity building among staff. Early implementation of this RTTT grand also includes helping students and parents develop Personalized Education Plans and increased benchmark testing. These reforms increase student choices as well as the extent to which educators understand the impact of their instruction on students.</p> <p>While the proposal includes information about data that will be available through Home Base, it is not clear how teachers will work together or individually to utilize that information to identify optimal learning approaches for each student.</p> <p>Teachers and principals will meet as site-improvement teams to discuss ongoing professional development related to professional effectiveness. This will include professional development assigned to teachers based on designated growth areas identified through the evaluation process. Training to be included for teachers includes a Habits of Mind workshop, Understanding by Design trainer, and the use of technology and curriculum facilitators. The RTTT grant will allow the teachers to utilize this training to increase the extent to which their school districts use existing PLCs to make data-driven decisions.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the high range of points for this section.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant adds new positions for this project, each of which has designated reporting responsibilities. These new positions fit seamlessly into the existing organizational structure. The positions include district-level roles, as well as an adequate number of site-level positions that will guide the curriculum development for the magnet-themed schools.</p> <p>Site level teams, which include parent representatives, have the autonomy to innovate with student schedules. Additionally, schools have final say in the design and implementation of curriculum.</p> <p>Elementary school students showing mastery on one grade level will be able to move ahead and receive instruction in another. Middle school students may take certain high school courses. High school students may take online courses, but nowhere does the applicant state that promotion from course to course at any level will be based upon mastery rather than seat time. This makes it unclear whether students will be able to demonstrate mastery of academic content at multiple times and in multiple ways.</p> <p>The applicant describes resources and practices already in place to help students with disabilities and English learners, then includes a description of how the proposed project builds on those supports. Primarily, this includes allowing students and their parents to choose schools not necessarily in their neighborhood if they feel the programs at another school are a better fit.</p> <p>Having responded in detail to the criteria with only minor lapses, the applicant receives a score in the high range of points for this section.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information to parents in their home languages and has full-time translators available in several languages. The proposal describes accommodations that are made for special needs students in accordance with federal law. No specific assurances are provided to explain how students will have access (transportation) to the magnet school of their choice. If the school meeting a particular academic design is far away, this could be a barrier for some students. Otherwise, deploying tablets to students will allow them access to learning resources both at school and at home. Training and support for students and parents include additional staff, as well as partnerships with outside entities, such as the local community college. The technology data system described in the proposal meets the criteria for data exportability as well as for interoperability.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the low end of the high range of points for this section.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The continuous improvement processes described in the proposed project include several appropriate internal processes, such as weekly PLC meetings and frequent monitoring by leadership staff. However, the plan only minimally addresses the role of external stakeholders in collecting information on project development, and very little information about frequent reporting.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the high range of points for this section.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes plans for internal stakeholders to collect data. However the plan to communicate learning processes with parents through student agendas is neither innovative nor thorough. Reporting to the public will be done through regularly scheduled meetings. It is not clear what process will guide the agenda-setting for those meetings or how the project leadership will utilize the feedback they receive.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the medium range of points for this section.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes 17 performance measures. These include academic targets as well as behavioral ones. The academic targets are vague, not including discussion of why particular grades were selected, nor specific goals for achievement. They state the intent to reach "AMO targets" rather than taking the opportunity to state those targets and include a discussion in narrative form of how they were chosen. The process for reviewing progress is embedded into the PLC and reporting procedures described in the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the high range of points for this section.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that the project coordinator and data analysis project lead will continuously review data, but this does not provide detail about how a representative sample of stakeholders will be included in evaluating the progress of project activities. The applicant also states that "return on investment" analyses will be conducted, but does not describe this process or how such considerations will be made. While these are important aspects to include in project evaluation, the methodology for determining "return" is not clear.</p> <p>The applicant receives a score in the medium range of points for this section.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget included in the proposal includes adequate funds to support project activities. All personnel costs and materials in the budget match items discussed in the narrative. The positions to be added are adequate to support the project, and funding includes an additional \$256,000 in local funds during the lifetime of the grant. This includes leveraged time from central office personnel and a contribution from the county commissioner's office to assist with printing costs.</p>		

The majority of grant expenditures will be for one-time costs, such as technology equipment, personnel, and professional development. The applicant justifies the expenses with the activities in the narrative.

The applicant receives full points for this section.

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

10

6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to seek other grant funding to sustain project activities, but this is an uncertain strategy. As such, the sustainability of the proposal is questionable. The applicant also plans to "bank" indirect cost rate funds, which is not legal. Since federal grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis, the funds will not actually remain available to the applicant.

The applicant receives points for the beginning of a plan for how to look for funds again in four years, and for estimating how much money it will take to sustain project activities. The commitment to \$10 per pupil in ongoing professional development is also positive.

Overall, the applicant receives a score in the middle range of points for this section.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a list and details of several partnerships that it sustains already. The proposal includes discussion of how several of these existing relationships will be leveraged to support the RTTT activities.

The six population-level goals for this section include academic, emotional/psychological, and college and career readiness targets. It is unclear how existing partnerships would be enhanced to help with performance on these indicators or with tracking them. These performance measures are better described as experiences or events than as student outcomes. For example, having all students receive training in Habits of the Mind is a goal to check off of a list rather than an indicator of academic achievement. Though community partners will contribute to the students having access to the Habits of Mind training, this alone does not extend the activity beyond the participating schools. Nonetheless, the applicant ties this training to improved results in discipline, which impacts student learning directly.

The applicant states that community partners will pay for teachers to undergo training and that the entire community will speak the Habits of Mind language. It is unclear from the proposal how this will be accomplished. This activity will build staff within the ranks of school district employees, but inculcating the business community and civic groups will be more challenging.

The applicant receives points in the middle range for this section.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The foundation of this proposed project is themed magnet schools for elementary and middle school students. Using RTTT funds will allow the applicant to develop the curriculum that is suited for these programs and allow students to choose their own educational paths. College and career readiness standards are already in place, and the data system under development will provide parents and teachers a system of communication they have not had before. The activities in the proposal are likely to lead to decreased achievement gaps, increased graduation and college-going rates, and improved educator effectiveness. In spite of some correctable flaws with planning for the management of the proposed project activities, the applicant has met the absolute priority.

Total	210	182
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0049NC-4 for Lenoir County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Lenoir County Public Schools (LCPS) proposes to implement Project APEX, its RttT-D funded reform effort, through three separate but integrated programs: 1) Magnet Themed Schools, 2) Career and College Ready Exploration, and 3) Personalized Learning. Together, these three programs form a system with the potential for a credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement because it provides a learning environment based on student interest and intrinsic motivation. and increases equity through personalizing student support based on student academic interests.

All LCPS K-8 schools would become Magnet Themed Schools. K-5 school themes will be World View/Dual Language, Academic Accelerated Studies, or Health and Wellness. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) would be the Grade 6-8 schools theme. The applicant points out that as they progress through these grades, students will have the opportunity of viewing and understanding the multiple career pathways that relate to their field of interest.

Families will be offered their choice of school. The proposal points out that a potential non-education-related consequence of the Magnet Themed Schools concept is that student cohorts based on academic interest, rather than geographic location, will fundamentally shift school populations towards greater diversity. Not mentioned, however, but a potential concern is the likely increase in transportation time, cost and availability, and the potential for the reluctance of parents to move their children from neighborhood schools. These factors can impact the viability of the program. The slightly lowered score for this criterion reflects the lack of consideration of this potential in the application.

The Career and College Ready Exploration Program provides opportunities for K-8 student to explore career and college possibilities in relation to their school's theme. Community partners would provide real world exposure to career and college opportunities in and beyond Lenoir County. The Habits of Mind initiative that focuses on the "soft skills" that students need for 21st century professional success is an existing district-wide program that would be integrated into this program.

LCPS currently participates in GEAR UP, a state-funded program administered by The University of North Carolina that is aimed at increasing the number of students from low-income districts who graduate from high school and go on to succeed in a postsecondary institution. APEX will work with GEAR UP

to provide field trips, internships, guest speakers, and curricula for all students (K-12). This team will also build the capacity of K-12 staff to work with community partners to provide career exploration programs and activities for all students.

The Personalized Learning component of the plan has students assuming a leadership role in working with teachers and parents to develop their own Individual Learning Pathways (ILPs) and associated Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) that connect areas of academic interest with learning goals, college- and career-ready standards, and future opportunities. All students in grades K-5 would receive iPads, and all students in grades 6-12, laptops, tools that can aid personalization and deeper learning. Professional development will focus on training teachers to access and use the educational technology.

Recognizing that all students do not learn at the same pace, the applicant proposes the flexibility of cross grade level grouping for remediation, enrichment, or interest based units. Students may move in and out of classrooms or courses based on individual learning needs, goals and pathways.

In support of APEX, LCPS has implemented and will apply to APEX, North Carolina's "Common Core and Essential

Standards” that combines the Common Core State Standards in K-12 Mathematics and K-12 English Language Arts with the revised North Carolina Essential Standards for English as a Second Language, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, Arts Education, and Healthful Living.

In addition, the district has used state RttT funding to build the technology infrastructure needed for implementation of Home Base, the state’s new interoperable data system.

LCPS participates in North Carolina’s Educator Evaluation System (NCEES), which captures data in a user-friendly online environment. The NCEES includes assessment of the impact on student learning and provides for personalized professional development plans, the opportunity to exercise greater choice in school placement, and inclusion in both school-based and virtual professional learning communities.

During the period of the RttT-D grant, two post-grant initiatives would be planned: 1) a scaled-up early childhood program focusing on preparing district children to enter kindergarten ready to learn; and 2) themed High School Career Academies for all 9-12 students. Possible Career Academy Themes to be identified through Phase 1 evaluation and stakeholder consultation include Academic Prep Academy, School of the Arts, Career Tech Prep Academy, Academy of Health Sciences, Criminal Justice and Fire and Rescue, Agricultural Technology Academy, and STEM Academy

LCPS has proposed an innovative vision for the provision of personalized learning and presents a compelling approach for its implementation.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

From the summer of 2012 through the fall of 2013, LCPS administrators and the School System Improvement Task Force comprised of teachers, principals, LEA administrators, parents, and business/community leaders developed the district’s reform vision. During this process, it was decided that all 17 of its elementary, middle, and high schools would participate in the LCPS’s APEX project. Although its preschool center is not included in the RttT-D grant application, the district proposes to plan for a post-grant upscale of its preschool center to align with APEX goals.

The application outlines in detail a logical timeframe and appropriate stakeholders, activities, and outcome of this process. The LCPS application includes a table of School Demographics documenting that collectively, the schools meet the competition’s eligibility requirements including the percentage of students from low-income families (68.6%) that exceeds the 40% base.

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

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Within the applicant’s RTTD project period, each school in the K-8 grade span will be a Magnet Themed Schools that incorporates Career and College Ready Exploration, and Personalized Learning. All schools, K-12, will integrate 1:1 personalize learning technology into their teaching and learning. Beyond the RTTD project period, the initiative towards personalized, student-driven learning will be scaled up to include two additional components: 1) an early childhood program that will focus on preparing all district children to enter kindergarten ready to learn, and 2) themed High School Career Academies for all 9-12 students.

APEX is aligned with LCPS's existing goals for improved student outcomes. These goals are

- Attain high academic achievement for all students to become globally competitive,
- Attract, retain, and develop 21st Century Professionals,
- Provide safe and orderly learning environments to develop healthy and responsible citizens,
- Provide leadership to guide innovation, and
- Provide engaging learning environments governed and supported by 21st century systems.

The applicant's high quality plan to scale up district-wide change in participating schools is based on these goals. The plan's logic model provides detailed descriptions of the key activities, rationale, benchmarks, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for each goal.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Performance of students on summative assessments presented in the application are based on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Math and Reading Exams Grades 3-8, and End-of course Math 1 and English II exams for 10th grade. The projections by sub-groups of improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets.

Projections by sub-groups for decreasing achievement gaps are presented as differences in percentages achieving proficiency on the NC End-of-Grade Tests for

grades 3-8 and End-of-Course Exams in Math 1 and English II for grade 10. Considering the expected impact of APEX, these projections are reasonably achievable as are the goals proposed for graduation and college enrollment rates.

It is noted that the applicant's tables for this criterion project goals only for the consortium overall, whereas the requirements call for projections both overall and by student subgroups for each participating LEA. Therefore, In terms of the consortium as a whole but not individual participating LEAs, the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by the proposal's ambitious annual student outcome goals.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Performance on end-of-year assessments is steadily improving at all three of LCPS schools (two elementary and one middle) that are currently included in the 5% of lowest achieving schools in the state. All three have shown gains in reading averages of 5% and 6.8% in math.

In the district's schools in general, end-of-grade results for grades 3-8 in reading went up 5.1% from 2009 to 2012, and Math by 5.9% in the same period. The increases in end-of-course results for grades 9-12 for Algebra, English, and Biology in the same period, were even greater.

LCPS has made significant gains in the performance of its students with disabilities (SWD). End of grade tests in reading and math of SWD increased for grades 3-8 from 27.5% for reading in 2010-11 to 36.9% in 2011-12, and from 47.7% for math in 2010-11 to 54.8% in 2011-12.

In addition to steady test score increases, LCPS reports the following positive trends:

- a) improvement in the drop-out rate which has decreased from 4.46% in 2007-2008 to 3.52% in 2010-2011.;
- b) increase in the enrollment numbers at the district's Early College High School (ECHS);
- c) increase in the numbers of students who have earned International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme recognition; and
- d) reduction in discipline referrals and out of school suspensions.

High school graduation rates shows a change from 69.47% in 2010 to 7.9% in 2013, an increase of 8.5% percentage points. College applications have grown from 319 in 2005-06 to 391 in 2009-10.

The applicant, LCPS, reports an overall record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and

achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.

Currently, student performance data are available to students, educators, and parents by means of report cards, interim reports, parent-teacher conferences, parent information sessions, articles in the region's newspaper, and the LCPS website. It is expected that formative data will become available to teachers, students, and parents through North Carolina's "Home Base"—a statewide web-based data system for teachers, students, parents, and administrators to access student data and teaching and learning resources.

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

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Currently, LCPS does not publish actual school-level salaries and expenditures. Such information is available only upon request.

Recognizing that all details of the budget—including the individual salaries for public employees—need to be made more transparent, the district's reform vision includes strategies for increasing transparency in the future. These strategies will include a link to copies of the LEA budgeting process, the approved budget for LEA and schools, and teacher salaries. However, these are minimal in that they rely on stakeholders awareness and ability to access.

LCPS states that it has systems in place with the capability of generating financial reports by district and school levels, and at the principals will hold budget planning sessions with and solicit feedback from all stakeholders, including parents and community members. LCPS will publish information on the website for each school, and will share hard copies with school and community members. This has the potential to more fully address this shortcoming.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LCPS application provides the following evidence of having conditions and sufficient autonomy under local and State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments and other aspects of its RtT-D proposal.

- The LCPS Board of Education, in its Education Policy Manual, establishes policies for providing leadership and direction through the formulation of goals and objectives, especially in defining and setting high academic standards for student success. The Board also supported the superintendent by responding positively to recommendations made by the superintendents pertaining to the this application for funding under 2013 RtT-D.
- The North Carolina General Statute 1152-105.41 requires that, beginning in kindergarten, LEAs must identify students who are at risk of failure and must develop a personalized education plan for identified students. These plans must allow for parent input and include focused interventions. This same statute gives LEAs the legal authority and requirement to individualize learning for students.
- Under the North Carolina Race to the Top initiative, LCPS has the opportunity and authority to develop a program that centers on educator effectiveness, lowest performing schools, standards and assessments, and data analysis.

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

15

14

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

From the summer of 2012 through the fall of 2013, LCPS administrators and the School System Improvement Task Force comprised of teachers, principals, LEA administrators, parents, and business/community leaders developed the district's reform vision. The LCPS Superintendent and Associate Superintendent visited every school in the district during which they presented details of the APEX proposal. This was followed up by the Superintendent who spoke with all teachers collectively during a professional session where he outlined the components of the APEX proposal in detail and gathered feedback. Additionally, a link on the LCPS website was established for staff to pose questions and receive answers from the central administration. There is no indication as to whether any feedback was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

Certified staff from each school signed letters of support (provided in the appendix of the proposal) indicating that 82% of staff members in the district's schools (K-12) are in support of APEX. This exceeds the required 70% minimum for districts without a formal bargaining organization. In addition, letters of support from a wide variety of stakeholders including government officials, civic groups, health care agencies, area businesses, and individuals are included in the appendix.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Lenoir County Public Schools' Project APEX proposal provides compelling evidence that it has developed a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. A schematic outlines the proposed alignment of District Goals, Key Activities and their Rationale, Timelines, Deliverables and Responsibilities.

The applicant proposes to engage and empower all students through two key strategies. Together, they address the criterion and have the potential to involved students in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest; provide access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning; master critical academic content and develop 21st century skills and traits. These strategies are:

1. Educational choice through the proposed Magnet Themed Schools concept, where student learning environments are based on academic interest rather than geographic location. By moving from neighborhood to themed schools, students will have enhanced opportunity for access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives.
2. Individual Learning Pathways (ILP) based on academic interest and college/career aspirations, and Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) that will relate to the magnet themes of the schools. By being involved in developing the PEP, students are able to understand that what they will be learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. High-need students and ESL students and students with disabilities will have access to accommodations provisions in their ILPs and PLPs. The applicant provides a PEP sample in the application's appendix.

Evidence supporting the implementation of strategy 2) includes plans to provide:

- A 1:1 Technology Initiative to ensure that every student and parent has access to Home Base, the district's interoperable data system that houses and uses data to create individualized learning experiences and formative assessments.
- Project-based learning designed to bring academic interest and learning choice into the classroom and foster 21st century skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Professional development and teaching supports designed to prepare teachers to connect each building's theme to the state's Common Core and Essential Standards.
- Utilization of the web-based 'Home Base' application for ongoing teacher, student, and parent tracking of progress towards academic mastery of core standards, skills, and competencies in relation to student ILPs, PLPs, and core learning goals. LCPS staff are being trained in use of Home Base during the current academic year (2013-14). This program has the potential to frequently update individual student data and inform personalized learning recommendations that can be used to address and determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

At the beginning of each academic year, students will receive training on how to use their personal technology device from Technology Facilitators in K-8 classrooms and online modules for grades 9-12. Students will also be supported on their use of technology by teachers who have themselves been trained.

LCPS has proposed a strong approach to instructional strategies for all participating students in a High Quality Plan that provides details regarding its implementation.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is commended for recognizing the need for extensive professional development of teachers in order to implement its ambitious education reform plan. Over 10% of the proposed budget is dedicated to professional development. The district will provide a variety of forums and resources to help teachers transition to the flexible, facilitative, collaborative, and responsive role described by APEX, its RttT-D proposed program.

Teachers will receive and utilize professional development to support learning personalization in a variety of ways, including:

- Developing curricular units that are responsive to each building's theme and aligned with the state's college- and career-ready standards. This has a good potential for application because the training will be delivered to school-based Unit Writing/Editing Teams.
- Guiding students and parents to develop Individual Learning Pathways (ILPs) and Personalized Education Plans (PEPs). This is innovative because it focuses on collaboration in the process rather than or in addition to a "how to write one" approach.
- The design and administering of appropriate formative assessments.
- Provision of both group learning (e.g. project-based learning), and individual learning (e.g., through 1:1 technology devices) that empower each student to extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Utilize the interoperable data system, Home Base, to measure and address student progress.
- Use data from teacher and principal evaluation to ensure that students have access to high quality instruction provided by effective teachers and leaders.
- Use of 1:1 technology to help students pursue their interests, meet any special learning needs, and achieve remediation or acceleration as needed.
- Use of Professional learning communities (PLCs) and the teacher evaluation system to analyze feedback to provide recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.
- Application of learning from Habits of Mind workshop to prepare students to learn and apply "soft skills" that they will need for 21st century professional success. This is innovative because it extends the acquisition of knowledge to the ability to apply it.

Although the proposal states that teachers will be supported in defining their own Personalized Professional Development Plans that align with personal interests, expertise, and areas where growth is needed, it does not provide information as to how this will be accomplished. Additionally, there is no evidence of teachers being provided with strategies to address the challenges to learning presented by high-risk students or sub-groups with wide gaps in performance scores. Overall, however, LCPS has proposed a strong approach to teaching and Learning in a High Quality Plan that provides solid details regarding Goals, Key Activities, Rationale, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Parties.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Project implementation is supported at the central office level by the Superintendent who will function as the lead for the overarching project. The proposal describes the Superintendent's role as "supervise implementation and ensure alignment with LCPS vision and mission," but offers no details as to how, to what extent, or when this will be carried out. It is noted that the proposed budget calls for a percentage of the Superintendent's salary to be paid from other sources used to support the project from grant funds. The Associate Superintendent, Finance Director, Executive Director of Operations, Director of Accountability, and Director of Career and Technical Education – all fulltime LCPS central office members – will each have an APEX related responsibility for each reform strategy and coordinate with new positions that would be created through RttT-D grant funds. A full-time Project Coordinator will be employed to oversee all grant funded positions. Not clear is the differentiation of roles vis a vis the central office staff and the Project Coordinator.

All schools maintain School Improvement Teams (with parent representation) Student Success Teams to provide building level leadership that will function as school leadership teams for the project. The proposal avers that, in collaboration with school principals, these teams have the authority to make key decisions and to develop each building's School Improvement Plan. Once the magnet themed schools are established each school's leadership will have the autonomy to design and deliver its own supportive structures and strategies for implementation. Such building-level involvement should increase the viability of the project's implementation since modifications can be made that align with the unique needs of theme based schools.

Educators can group children based on needs and skills mastered, allowing them to receive targeted support and progress according to personal mastery rather than time spent on a topic. For example, students will be assigned to accelerated learning classes based on aptitude and achievement test scores, motivation, social maturity, and classroom performance;

and children may enter kindergarten before the entry age of 5 by demonstrating exceptional abilities beyond the average school readiness benchmarks.

To accommodate special needs and differences, the applicant proposes to:

- produce instructional and administrative materials in various languages in order to meet the needs of its English as a second language (ESL) population.
- through its themed schools, provide opportunity for economically disadvantaged students to attend school outside of their poverty neighborhood and providing access to technology at home.
- provide opportunity for students with disabilities to create clear, rigorous, and realistic post-secondary goals; and to have individual access to software that can be accessed regardless of their disabilities.
- provide ELL students with access to software that can be heard in native language as well as English; and the choice of a school of dual language instruction.

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

LCPS proposes to provide access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources to all participating students, including students from high poverty localities, with equal access to school choice through its Themed schools. It will also give students equal access to technology devices through 1:1 technology that can be used in school and at home.

Training will be provided to parents on the technical aspects of how students can access programs such as Accelerated Reader or Study Island from home. Special populations, such as English language learners, will receive extra support. For example, ESL teachers will conduct technology workshops with parents.

Various tools will provide a measurement of the individual student's progress over time and a diagnosis of opportunities for growth, helping educators identify which students are at risk for under-achievement. These tools include Home Base, an interoperable student information web-based system that enables school administrators and teachers to make timely decisions that impact student performance. Home base is also available to parents, an important feature because it makes it possible for a parent or student to combine data from school, extracurricular activities, or online learning experiences. These data can form the basis of electronic personal learning profiles and can inform students' personal learning plans. Another tool is PowerSchool which features attendance management, tracking and notification, discipline management and reporting, assessment reporting, faculty and family management, and student record and transcript exchange.

The applicant proposes a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure by, for example, holding monthly meeting of principals and directors conducted by the superintendent, varied advisory committee meetings conducted by the different project leads, meetings of the teacher advisory committee, and school-level meetings of the instructional improvement and student success committees. Activities include annual updating of the district improvement plan, professional development plan, and school improvement plans to reflect developments in Project APEX.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that specifies how it will track data and evaluate activities, that projects timelines and deliverables, and lists outcomes and persons responsible. Among the high-quality activities proposed that hold the promise of effectively implementing the project are:

- training teachers to analyze formative and benchmark data to continuously address student needs. This will help bring the improvement process to the school and classroom level.
- Disaggregating and analyzing benchmark and summative data from district-wide benchmarks. This provides

feedback that can be used to inform ongoing corrections and improvements as well as information to parents and students on progress toward project goals.

- Survey of students, parents and school staffs to determine the extent to which themed schools are improving motivation and engagement, and 1:1 technology is addressing individual student needs.

Analysis and disaggregation of benchmark and summative data, ILP data, attendance data, discipline data, and survey results in order to provide LCPS with information with which to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, and design corrective actions to address progress towards growth in student achievement.

Each year during the project period, a team comprised of the APEX Coordinator, LCPS Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, and Executive Director of Operations will review each performance measure and outcome to ensure that it is sufficient to gauge implementation progress. If the measure is not sufficient, this team will revise and rewrite the measure to ensure validity and progress moving forward.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Key mechanisms for communication will include: parent-teacher-student conferences; notebooks through which parents and teachers exchange notes; email, letter, phone call, and text message exchanges; PTA meetings; open house meetings; School Advisory Councils; School Improvement Teams; and Board of Education meetings.

It is noted that the applicant has articulated a process for acting on stakeholder feedback from these communication mechanisms:

Step 1 – Form an internal Project Data Review Team to receive feedback;

Step 2 – Aggregate and summarize all data received at regular intervals;

Step 3 – Construct recommendations for revisions and improvements based on feedback; and Step 4 – Report findings to the LCPS BOE, superintendent, principals, teachers, and outside evaluators.

Although these are viable aspects of a process for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, the proposal offers little detail as to when and to what extent they will be managed, implemented, and maintained.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal addresses the number of performance measures along with their rationales for the various grade levels as required by the criterion. These performance measures apply to the district overall as is required along with ambitious yet achievable goals for subgroups

LCPS has chosen not to complete the table listing performance goals of of participating students by subgroup whose teacher of record and principal are highly effective. The applicant points out that this requirement is not applicable to Lenoir County Public Schools at this time, since, according to North Carolina's approved Race to the Top plan and waiver from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, no teacher or principal in North Carolina will receive a status of effective or highly effective until the start of the 2016-2017 school year. Since the applicant did not complete this table, judgment regarding ambitious yet achievable targets cannot be fully made, although the data that is presented does meet this requirement by projecting goals than bat align with gains that can be expected from implementation of APEX.

Each year during the project period, a team comprised of the APEX Coordinator, LCPS Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, and Executive Director of Operations will review each performance measure and outcome to ensure that it is sufficient to gauge implementation progress. A table is provided that displays in detail the Performance Measures, Rationale, and Relevance to APEX Reform. Although the table states that this review will demonstrate the extent to which the key APEX reforms (magnet themed schools and 1:1 technology initiative) are improving student engagement and reducing undesired behaviors, there are no indications of how the measure would be improved over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to evaluate APEX through an internal Project Data Review Team comprised of all APEX project leads with supervising central officer personnel and project coordinators, as well as principal, teacher, and parent representatives. LCPS will contract with an outside evaluation consultant to assist the team and verify its conclusions.</p> <p>An element of the evaluation effort will be an ongoing “return on investment” analyses that will compare expenditures being made in the grant project with changes in staff, student, and community outputs and outcomes being realized. This analysis will look for improvements in the following areas:</p> <p>(1) Improved recruitment and retention rates of high quality, professional educators as a result of district transformation, including enhanced professional development and provision for professional choice.</p> <p>(2) A continuation of the growth recently seen in LCPS’s high school graduation rate which will translate as a “return on investment.”</p> <p>The proposal does not provide enough detail as to how, when and to what extent these efforts will take place to warrant a high score for this criterion.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Funds used to support the project will derive from three main sources:</p> <p>1) RTTD grant funds (\$19,999,907.87)</p> <p>2) Leveraged time for appropriate central office personnel who will supervise and assist with each of the four budget projects (valued at \$208,068.00) <u>Note: this reviewer is not sure whether in-kind time can be considered as part of the RttT-D budget</u></p> <p>3) Local funds from the County Commissioner to support the publishing of flyers, pamphlets, forms, and mailings to parents (\$48,000)</p> <p>It is noted that actual funds from sources other than RttT-D funds total \$89,068.00 for the total grant period; a relatively small amount. All monies from the sources listed above are sufficient and reasonable to fund the development and full implementation of APEX.</p> <p>One-time investments will include: computer hardware and printers for new personnel (\$34,000); professional development consultants (\$165,250); and an outside evaluator (\$174,000) to apply over the life of the grant.</p> <p>Ongoing operating costs will include: hardware for 1:1 Technology Initiative (\$2,806,840 per year); materials to keep Career and College Exploration program supplied (approximately \$16,850 per year); and monies for printing and mailing forms, pamphlets (\$48,000 per year).</p> <p>It is noted that, other than no funds being included for maintenance of technology, the amounts budgeted for the project's implementation are appropriate given current and anticipated costs to n sustain all the tenets of the program.</p> <p>In general, items with a value of less than \$5,000, such as laptops, printers, and desktop computers, can be considered to be supplies. If the LCPS capitalization policy defines these items as equipment, the applicant may include them under the equipment category in the budget in which case, they may not be applied to their indirect cost rate.</p> <p>Lenoir County Public Schools has constructed a budget that reasonably supports the development and implementation of the themed schools in the K-8 grade span; 1:1 technology initiative to support personalized learning for all students, K-12; and the Career and College Ready Exploration Program K-8.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

At the end of the grant period, all personnel hired with the grant will be phased out. The applicant presents a plan with reasonable elements, based on its local structure and components of APEX, to sustain the project's goals after the term of the grant. These elements include

- confidence that the strength and variety of professional development provided during the grant period will have developed capacity among teachers and principals in each school to continue the aims of the project. For example, a trained 1:1 vanguard of lead teachers at each school will collaborate with district curriculum staff in maintaining the integrity and fidelity of that aspect of APEX.
- transference of support of the interoperable data system, Home Base, to the North Carolina DPI.
- reliance on continued district support for APEX plus post-grant allotted funds, banked indirect costs, and targeted budgeting of federal, state and local funds to address the estimated \$2,804,000 in funds needed annually to sustain and continue the projects.
- assumption of management of the lease contract, maintenance, and upkeep of technology by the district's existing Technology Department.

The approximate cost for maintenance of equipment and continued lease is estimated to be \$2,000,000 per year and a combination of federal, state, and local allotments will be utilized to fund this portion of the project on a continuing basis.

State support is evidenced by support of the interoperable data system 'Home Base', by the North Carolina DPI. The applicant proposes that all LCPS operations and programs will be re-evaluated in terms of improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget light of developments in APEX. However no information is provided as to how, when or by whom.

A "Sustainability Committee" will be formed upon receipt of the award. This committee will be charged with producing the first sustainability plan by July 2015. Elements of this plan will include an analysis of the core budgetary elements associated with each project strategy that could need continued post-award funding, and identification of new revenue streams.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

LCPS provides additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students by aligning with and support from the applicant's area business and professional community. These partnerships include

- STEM East, a private/public network that supports STEM themes in schools and creates education pathways that have relevance to real-world economic needs
- Lenoir Memorial Hospital, sponsor of a nutrition outreach program for K-5 students and parents.
- The Kinston Rotary Club that provides mentors for students.
- Spirit AeroSystems, an organization that supports K-12 students in career exploration
- A variety of companies and organizations that host job site field trips for students and teachers.
- The City of Kinston Department of Public Safety helps young people who are at risk of antisocial or criminal behavior.

LCPS tracks and uses applicable data on the interoperable data system, Home Base. As the data becomes available at the end of each year the APEX Coordinator, Data Analysis Lead Career and College Lead with the collaboration of principals and parent representatives will review priorities, recommend any changes (e.g. new activities or partnerships), and measure progress towards addressing students' social, emotional, or behavioral goals.

Since all the district's students participate in APEX, LCPS will address the requirement to "scale the model beyond the

participating students” by building on the district’s involvement in “Project Bright Tomorrow,” a state initiative aimed at equipping educators to treat all students as gifted young scholars.

As part of APEX, LCPS proposes to build on and reinforce its application of Habits of Mind (HOM) in all K-12 classrooms. HOM connects students with community partners who can help them exercise “soft skills” in the real world.

The proposal does not describe how the partnership would integrate education and other services that address social-emotional, and behavioral needs, nor does it describe how the partnership and LEA would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant meets Priority 1 by coherently and comprehensively addressing the core educational assurance areas required by this grant application by three separate but integrated programs: 1) Magnet Themed Schools, 2) Career and College Ready Exploration, and 3) Personalized Learning. Together, these three programs form a system with the potential for a credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement because it provides a learning environment based on student interest and intrinsic motivation. and increases equity through personalizing student support based on student academic interests.

The proposal describes in detail the applicant’s plans to

1. align curriculum, instruction, and formative assessments with individual student abilities and aspirations;
2. provide each student with access to 21st Century Technology;
3. support individual students by using data to provide time, structure and equipment needed for that student to learn at a high level; and
4. build teacher’s capacity, knowledge, and skill to personalize instruction and deliver 21st Century Learning Experiences.

Since all schools and students in LCPS will participate in the program, it has the potential to expand student access to the most effective educators, decrease achievement gaps across student groups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	186
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