



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0005OR-1 for McMinnville School District #40

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

McMinnville's vision of educational reform is to ensure that all of this school district's children

“. . . receive an education characterized by personalized characterized by personalized learning environments that foster rigor, relevance, and relationships.” The LEA then lists nine credible goals for achieving the objectives of accelerating student achievement and deepening learning. For example, one goal is to increase kindergarten readiness and long-term student achievement by providing universal pre-kindergarten to all four-year-olds in the district. In later sections of the proposal, the LEA elaborates on its other goals and how these goals will be met.

The LEA makes a sufficient case that its proposal is building on the four core educational assurance areas. When the LEA's state adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) two years ago, the district immediately initiated curriculum and professional development programs to prepare teachers to effectively implement the Common Core. The district uses Rigorous Curriculum Design (RCD) to align curriculum and instruction to CCSS. All teachers and administrators have been trained in this model.

The district has also begun to design and implement common standards-based formative and summative assessments and this school year will use its new Data Teams to examine assessment data twice-monthly to determine student learning needs. Data Team members have received extensive training in the last three years as well as all K-12 teachers and school leaders. And, the LEA primarily uses two data systems to measure student growth: (1) Oregon's state department of education's online data system and (2) the district's online data system, Mastery in Motion. The state system provides both growth and achievement results by school and student subgroup on the state's reading and math assessments, whereas the local data system also tracks achievement and growth by teacher in reading, math, and science. The LEA will also be using its own new formative and summative assessments to measure student learning. McMinnville has, therefore, thoughtfully prepared its administrative and instructional staff to use standards, assessments, and data systems to inform implementation of project components to have students' college and career ready.

The LEA maintains that its performance-based compensation system implemented in 2011-2012 and a new performance-based evaluation system to be implemented with the proposed project, as well as its use of Rigorous Curriculum Design, Data Teams, and Power Strategies for Effective Teaching will support the recruitment, development, and retention of effective teachers and administrators, but it provides no evidence that these structures will achieve this objective. Data showing that the two-year old compensation system resulted in improved teaching, increased school and district leadership, and retention of the most effective teachers would have strengthened the LEA's assertion. On the other hand, the district's participation in the state's piloting of Oregon's new performance-based evaluation system last school year bodes well for its successful use of this system to lift professional practice to national INTASC and ISLLC standards. Yet, no evidence was provided that the pilot resulted in developing effective teachers. The LEA only cited one example of how it will retain effective teachers; namely providing a one-to-one mentoring program for novice teachers. No strategies for retaining effective tenured teachers or focused recruitment of effective teachers were described.

With regard to articulating what McMinnville's personalized classroom experience will feel like, look like, or sound like for students and teachers, the applicant provides an overview of program components that it will implement without illustrating how any one element or a collection of the listed elements will provide an integrated personalized education for individual students in McMinnville schools. The description provided is comparable to a textbook definition of personalized learning,

rather than a mirror into the classroom.

The LEA did not address how it would turn-around its low-achieving schools, in this section nor in any other section of the grant application relating to low-performing schools, taking the position that it did not have to respond to this application criteria since it does not have any “persistently low-achieving schools” as determined by its state department of education. There remains the need however, to explain how this RTTD initiative will impact the district’s lower performing schools --- a responsibility of all districts --- even if they are not among the lowest achieving in the state.

In summary, the LEA described a vision for reform that was not always coherent in its descriptions of a Fulton County personalized learning environment and how effective teachers and administrators with the skills to implement such a teaching-learning environment would be recruited and retained, but presented some credible goals and strategies for improving student achievement. McMinnville has also prepared its administrative and instructional staff to use standards, assessments, and data systems to improve instruction and have students’ college and career ready. The initiative’s impact on the district’s lower performing schools was not addressed by the LEA.

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

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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the application provides limited information regarding the process used to select the schools of the project. No indication of the specific process used to select the schools was found here or elsewhere in the application. In essence, although the LEA indicates that all district schools, grade levels, and subjects will be included in the project no statements were provided as to why and how the district decided to take this broad-based approach. The LEA did indicate that a Design Team comprised of teachers, administrators, and the union made the decision, but again the criteria for their decision was not included. The School Demographics table does list all participating schools, grade levels, and the total number of participating students, as well as the number of low-income and high-need students to be served by the project. The table, therefore, provides evidence that the participating schools individually and collectively meet the competition’s eligibility requirements.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The RTTD grant requires that applicant’s plans state the theory of change used to develop its proposal and enumerate key goals and the activities for achieving the district’s reform objectives, a reasonable implementation timeline, designated and appropriate deliverables and staff responsibilities as a minimum requirement for a high-quality reform plan, linked to a clearly stated theory of change. In this instance, the reviewer is asked to deduce that the operable theory of change visually represented in Table C is that the selected strategies provide leverage points for achieving the anticipated outcomes. So, for example, a direct and positive relationship is depicted between providing intensive professional development in the Rigorous Curriculum Design model and increasing teacher effective and the percentage of students who have effective teachers; a positive relationship and outcome that the LEA does not support with any evidence. There is, however, evidence in the Project Implementation Plan of thoughtful planning whereby each operational step of the program is listed with activities for completing the components of the initiative, timelines, deliverables, and staff responsibilities.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

McMinnville has set target goals that at least 84% of students at every grade level overall are projected to attain proficiency on state assessments in reading by 2016-2017. Similar targets have been set for mathematics in that a minimum of 86% of students at every grade level overall will attain proficiency on state assessments in mathematics by 2016-2017. To attain these ends, the LEA has adopted Oregon’s Growth Model targets for each assessed grade. These targets are different for students overall and for each subgroup. For example, they range from modest targets of 2.3% growth for students overall for 4th grade reading year to year to more aggressive targets of 5.5% growth year to year in reading for students with disabilities. Since these are state-established benchmarks with no historical data of past patterns of attainment provided by the district, it is difficult to determine whether the targets are ambitious. Certainly, they anticipate gains of from over 10% to nearly 30% for the subgroups in the four years of the project; expectations that are perhaps somewhat unrealistic across all grades and schools. However, it appears that the targets were set by the state as being minimally attainable for this district.

Projected decreases to a 12.6% gap by project's end for students with disabilities at grade 3 in reading as compared to students overall is an example of the kind of significant closing of achievement gaps envisioned for this project. Similarly aggressive decreases are displayed in Table (A)(4)(b) for Limited English Proficient students. Again, there is no data presented to substantiate probable attainment of these projections. Projected achievement gap data is not presented for grades 4 and 6, even though students in these grades take the state assessments.

The LEA also projects huge increases in graduation rates overall and for all its subgroups of from 5% (for white students) to 11% (for students with disabilities). College enrollment is to increase from as low as 1.0% in 2012-2013 for English learners to 35.4% in 2016-2017, another unverifiable example of the laudable, though probably not viable goals the LEA has for improved student learning and increased equity. Yet, even with these projections, gaps among subgroups remain significant. Hispanic student college enrollment will still have a 20% gap when compared to overall student college enrollment by the end of the grant period.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In both 2012 and 2013, McMinnville had three elementary schools to be ranked as Model Schools by the Oregon state department of education based on improved student achievement and student growth. This achievement is verified by a letter of support from the Director of Federal Systems for the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oregon Department of Education. In 2012, one of its middle schools also ranked in the top 5% of all middle schools in the state, although the school appears to have dropped in its rating in 2013. Still, "seven of the district's nine schools demonstrated subgroup growth significantly greater than the state average" in 2013.</p> <p>Data in Table E shows statistical support only for grade 11 for the LEA's contention that it has a clear record of increasing proficiency on the state assessment in reading and math from 2008 - 2009 to 2012 - 2013. The LEA explains the lack of evidence for other tested grades on the fact that the benchmark for proficiency for other grades has changed over the years. Yet, the LEA inconsistently goes on to present a district to state comparison of proficiency rates based on a composite of grades 3-8 and grade 11 scores. The meaning of this comparison is therefore nebulous.</p> <p>The Dual Credits Earned data shows a significant increase of over 6,000 college credits earned from 2005-2006 to 2012-2013, but it cannot be determined if the increases were primarily the result of enrollment of under-represented students in the program or more credits taken by traditional dual credit students. Thus, the question of increased equity is not validated by the data presented. The LEA's Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Comparison shows that for the class of 2012, McMinnville had a graduation rate for all students of 9.4% higher than the state average.</p> <p>The LEA does provide examples of project reforms it says have contributed to its success in increasing student outcomes. These include, for example, reading interventions and double-block and supplemental instruction, but no evidence of student achievement before and after introduction of these programs is shared to show that these caused better learning outcomes.</p> <p>Student performance data is available to students, parents, and the district's educators in several formats: online through the district's eschool database and in hard-copy grade and state assessment reports. District-developed formative and summative assessment results will also be available for the first-time this year. All report data is used to inform and alter instruction as needed in a cyclical process. One concern raised by the LEA is that next year's new, annual Smarter Balance Assessments will take longer to score and report. The LEA does not indicate how it will address its own concern with regard to this replacement test for the state assessment.</p> <p>The two student vignettes describing the schooling experiences and successes of Martin and Alicia certainly speak to commendable student success, but were not proven to be illustrative of the majority of McMinnville students, especially high-need students, nor were connections directly made between these student outcomes and the proposed programs.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>McMinnville proudly reports that it has, for the past four years, been the recipient of Financial Reporting Achievement Award by the Government Finance Officers Association because of its transparency in monitoring and reporting on district finances and expenditures. This achievement is also verified by a letter from the Director of Federal Systems for the</p>		

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oregon Department of Education. The LEA also states that its annual Comprehensive Financial Report is in keeping with state requirements for reporting state and local funding and spending information. They say that the annual financial report is on the district website, and has actual personnel salaries at the school-level for all instructional and support staff, as well as non-personnel expenditures as required by this grant. No print-out of the report or link to the report is included in the body of this proposal or appendix for possible verification. Hardcopies of financial data are available upon request.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The most significant information provided by the LEA in responding to this section of the RTTD application is its discussion of Oregon’s ESEA waiver for state school districts to implement comprehensive education reform with expanded flexibility and autonomy. Now McMinnville, like other Oregon districts, can use multiple measures of district performance, including new teacher and administrator performance evaluation systems such as is being proposed for this project. State statutes also allow McMinnville to implement credit by proficiency programs and extended-day kindergarten, both cornerstones of this LEA’s project. Therefore, successful conditions and sufficient autonomy exist under State legal, statutory, regulatory requirements to implement this project. Additionally, the LEA has letters of support from the state department of education and mayor of McMinnville following these entities review and comment on the LEA’s grant application as required by grant guidelines. While these letters do not confirm autonomy, they do suggest commitment to the proposed project. As the Mayor stated to undergird his statement of support, the city of McMinnville and the McMinnville School District “... are committed to working individually and, more importantly, together to achieve the goals articulated in the proposal.” There was no evidence of state, legal statutory, or regulatory requirements that would impede implementing a personalized learning environment and the ESEA waiver provides additional autonomy for specific components of the LEA’s plan for opening alternative opportunities for student learning.

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

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As part of its 2012 application for RTTD funding, in 2010-2011 the district assembled a Design Team “... to research, develop, and identify high-leverage structures and strategies focused on increasing student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps.” The LEA stated that the 25-member team included teachers, administrators, and teacher union representatives. This Design Team became a standing committee that “... collaborated on all elements of the Winning the Future design and sought extensive input from parents, students, partners, and other stakeholders.” But, there was no listing of individual team members and their affiliation or degree of or type of meaningful input. There was no elaboration on how the Design Team went about getting input from stakeholders or what they found and how the input was used. Student input, to gather information as to how the district might better engage participating students in classroom and program modules of the project, was solicited through a survey and group interviews.

The LEA stated that over 50 stakeholders participated in the design of the project and offered letters of support as evidence of the stakeholders’ involvement. While the stakeholder groups are listed in Table J, there was no indication of the specific contribution of the individual entities or how the design was altered by explicit group input. Numerous letters of support from participating groups are included in the Appendix, but the letters are endorsements of the LEA submitting the proposal rather than evidence of direct involvement of any individual or group in design of or revisions to the proposal. The LEA submitted the proposal to the Mayor of the City of McMinnville and the state department of education for 10 business days to comment. There were no actionable comments from these governmental bodies. There is no letter of support or endorsement from the teacher’s union, although the president of the local teacher association signed the Application Assurances page as required to apply for the grant. Neither was there any evidence of direct teacher union involvement to any degree in design of or revisions to the proposal. The union did pick half of the Design Team members, but the criteria for selection or the expertise brought to the development of the proposal was not shared by the LEA.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As previously commented, the applicant lays out a comprehensive and coherent plan of activities, deliverables, and timelines, and persons responsible for the 21 program components of Winning the Future. Here a more exhaustive

description of each component is provided. Many of the programs are research- and standards-based, proven approaches to increasing student achievement in reading and math, accelerating student learning, and involving parents in their child's education. Such research provides credibility to the LEA's contention that students will master critical thinking and problem-solving skills since these are embedded in many of the nationally-recognized programs such as STEM/STREAM. The existing high school Career Pathways and Small Learning Communities for 9th grade that will be continued through the grant period link subject area learnings to individual student college and career goals.

Beginning in grade 6 the district will provide students with a Personal Education Plan and Profile to individualize content and skill development. Students will be guided in developing personal and career goals by teacher mentors, but there was no mention of how students will be taught to use planning tools to track their progress toward their espoused goals. A limitation of the Personal Education Plan and Profile as shown is that it is geared to high school students and may not be age-appropriate or student friendly for younger students at elementary or even middle school levels. However, the student-generated personal goal statements are reasonable, though not sophisticated mechanisms for helping students of all age-levels measure progress toward their goals, assuming regular updating and ongoing feedback from educators. There was no evidence or specific technique for how this will be assured; in other words, the applicant is vague about how students will be given continuous feedback from instructional tools and digital learning environments to determine progress and make learning recommendations based on current learning.

Most notable with regard to grant requirements for parent involvement to support student learning is the proposed "Ready for Kindergarten" child development workshop for parents of economically disadvantaged, English learner, and other high-need families. The cited two-year study of the effectiveness of Ready for Kindergarten supports the LEA's rationale for including this component in the project. English classes, financial literacy programs, and technology classes also have the potential to increase parental involvement in their children's own education, but no record of the district's experience or success in attracting parents in large numbers to such programs is provided. Thus, more avenues needed to be included in the proposal establishing how parents could be involved in tracking their child's progress toward on-time graduation by meeting graduation requirements. Parents, especially parents of high-need students, would benefit from being thoroughly informed about such graduation options as credit by proficiency or college seminar classes for them to knowledgeably assist their child; this kind of parent involvement was not included in the proposal. In the alternative, the LEA is commended for including the ASPIRE mentoring program to support students in being on track toward meeting college and career standards.

Culturally-competent curriculum programs, if appropriately designed to positively address the cultures of ethnic, racial, and gender groups in a community can deepen student understanding of other ways of life different from a student's own. There are several nationally-recognized and researched multi-cultural and culturally-competent curriculum programs available to LEAs that have been shown to positively "expose" students to diverse cultures. It was not possible to evaluate how McMinnville will implement this component of learning so that all students are empowered without knowing the research-based approaches that will be used.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA will employ a three-pronged approach to increasing educator effectiveness in implementing project strategies: (1) a performance-based evaluation system discussed throughout the application; (2) a performance-based compensation system that is also foundational to the project's design; and (3) intensive professional development in curriculum and instructional frameworks such as RCD, Power Strategies, Data Team analysis of student data to inform instruction. Each of these strategies is described in detail. The Power Strategies to Engage the Learner part of the narrative highlights collaborative learning and inquiry projects as one way to provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks. Many of the Power Strategies overall --- concept attainment, advance organizers, comparisons, power questioning, and the use of non-linguistic images --- are from a long-line of research in many studies showing the utility and effectiveness for teaching all students, particularly high-need students.

Tiered professional development for educators by years of service and job-embedded coaching is particularly appropriate for tailoring training to educator needs and the LEA shows foresight in planning for such a sound approach. However, this LEA's RTTD program has a large number of new initiatives for teachers to understand and then implement to proficiency if student achievement is to be increased and accelerated. It is unlikely that a calendar of professional development that addresses the teacher and administrator skills and knowledge of all the LEA's reform initiatives can be reasonably established with consideration of out-of-class teacher time. Regular and ongoing administrative support and monitoring of teacher use of such a large number of professional development learnings planned by this LEA for its full and successful implementation of personalized learning is also somewhat untenable.

While the LEAs existing Data Teams provide an appropriately bi-monthly forum for examining student data to identify

individual and collective student needs and change instructional focus, this is the only professional learning community presented to support raising individual and collective teacher capacity for personalized learning environments.

The LEA is commended for using an evaluation system with tenets such as goal setting, self-reflection, and evaluator and teacher collaboration in collecting evidence for formative and summative evaluations that are aligned with InTASC and ISLLC standards. But the evaluation cycle does not include recommendations or interventions for educators who continuously receive performance ratings indicative of ineffective practice so that no students have ineffective teachers or principals. No high-quality plan is presented to address this possibility so that the number of students with effective educators increases measurably nor is there discussion of how the district will increase the number of effective teachers and principals in hard-to-staff schools or subjects. Throughout the proposal, educator use of digital and technology resources is given limited attention. Here too, no specific digital resources aligned to college- and career-requirements to be used with students to facilitate their achievement of standards-based goals or technology resources to improve teacher effectiveness and continuous school improvement are identified.

On the whole however, the three-pronged approach provides a framework, if not all the specifics, for addressing the need for frequent measuring of student progress, training for teachers to have the skills and knowledge to meet students' academic needs, and adaptation of curriculum to college- and career-ready standards.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In its attempt to present a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that will result in each student having the support and resources they need to succeed, the LEA describes the existing leadership structure of the district. The Board of Directors, superintendent, and administrative council will oversee the project in general, with some staff having specific, assigned responsibility for particular aspects of the project. For example, the Human Resources Director has "responsibility for managing the performance-based evaluation system that will be used in the project." But, this duty, like many others for central office staff appears to be merely an assumption of an already existing responsibility, broadened to include the project. The Project Director is also described as "overseeing" the components of the project to ensure fidelity of implementation rather than having direct management or administration of the grant program. It is unclear whose specific responsibility it is for supervision and making changes to the grant program where and when needed

Each school has a Building Leadership Team (BLT), the school leadership team of the schools of the district. The BLTs, together with the principal, have flexibility and autonomy over schedules, budgets, staffing, and other school-level operations. There are also Site Councils at each of the participating schools with responsibilities and membership that is very similar to the BLTs. Therefore, it is difficult to discriminate how the work of these two groups will be integrated so as not to overlap or impede implementation of the grant. Again, as for the district leadership structure above, it is also not clear how the work of these two groups has been re-defined for this initiative as opposed to their present place in school operations.

The LEA asserts that the Power Strategies for Effective Teaching are particularly well-suited to making learning accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. This LEA's students with disabilities and limited English proficient pupils are mostly in inclusive, regular education classrooms where a push-in model is used. The impact of the teacher use of the Power Strategies approach on learning by students with disabilities and English learners was not documented using the district's own experience or research by the Power Strategies developer. Nor was any evidence presented that the district's present push-in is having a profoundly positive effect on student learning for these groups of students such that it should continue as is. The research base for the LEA's proposed use of Universal Design for Learning was more convincingly presented, but the LEA still did not state its specific plans for providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. The LEA instead shared neuroscience principles regarding brain networks. Finally, although the LEA spoke of creating a technology-rich environment to increase accessibility of students with disabilities and English language learners, no specific software programs or instructional uses of technology were identified or discussed. The term "technology-rich" was used repeatedly like a metaphor without any substance surrounding it.

As previously indicated, there also does not appear to have been any investigation or consideration by the LEA and Board of Directors as to whether there was a need for changes to policy or infrastructure to more effectively implement the proposed project. In essence, already existing central office and school structures and policies will remain in place, without

contemplation of the possibility that any of these might block the provision of RTTD services to all participating schools and all students.

Thus, some of the requirements of a high-quality plan such as identifying district staff and how their work will relate to the project are included in this proposal, but other criteria for a high-quality plan (as defined in the RTTD guidelines) such as specific activities for policies, practices, and rules in support of having an educational system at district, school, classroom levels were absent or not fully explained.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Here the concern is on whether the LEA's planned project infrastructure supports students and parents as well as educators with accessible learning resources, technology systems and user-friendly data bases. The applicant provides several examples of appropriate infrastructure support to these ends. As previously documented, student performance data is available to pupils, parents, and the district's educators in several formats: online through the district's eschool database and in hard-copy grade and state assessment reports. And, the district makes the assurance, which can only be accepted without hard evidence, that the LEA uses interoperable data systems, linking human resources, student information, budget, and student achievement data. Again, there also does not appear to have been any investigation/consideration by the LEA and Board of Directors as to whether there is a need for changes to policy or infrastructure to more effectively implement the proposed project. In essence, already existing central office and school structures and policies will remain in place, without consideration of the possibility that any of these might impede services to all participating schools.

Critical to development of the program and its impact on student college and career-readiness is the access students, parents, and district educators have to all applicable components of the Winning the Future Project. Commendably, the LEA emphasizes the fact that "There are no project components that have a cost to the user (student, parent, family) or a fee associated with the service." In a comprehensive way, the LEA has planned for transportation to out-of-school and for extended-day programs, student and parent access to the district student performance data base for families without computers or access to the Internet at the planned family resource centers. Technical support to students and their families and the students' educators will be available through the District Technology Department and the resource centers. Though the observation is repetitive, specific technology resources for students, parents, and educators other than the district's existing online data base and grade reports are not identified, so the response regarding electronic tools or software for storing personal records and for personalizing the learning environment did not adequately speak to how technology will be used to enhance and support this initiative.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Earlier in the proposal, external evaluators are cited in the Implementation Plan as being responsible for "continuous and systematic project evaluation." Here, a more complete Project Evaluation Plan names the measures used to evaluate program components, what the measure is assessing, and the timeline for conducting each evaluation. For example, the goal of increasing kindergarten readiness to be achieved through the LEA's proposed universal pre-school component for all four-year olds, will be evaluated each year using the Oregon Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Staff members --- other than the outside evaluation team that will be hired for full implementation of the Evaluation Plan --- responsible for giving indicated assessments were not identified. It is notable however, that the Evaluation Plan is designed to serve five primary purposes, including but not limited to assessing the effectiveness and cost-benefit of project strategies. Worthily, the LEA has also looked ahead to using the formative, interim, and summative evaluations "to provide guidance about effective products and practices for dissemination, replication, and/or testing in other settings." RTTD grants are established particularly to facilitate this broader national impact.

Also significant is the LEAs plan for quantitative and qualitative measures. Site observations are a focused way to document effective operations in program component activities and services that classical quantitative assessments cannot always measure. The evaluations will additionally result in formal recommendations, based on hard data, to support continuous project improvements.

The LEA states that an observation instrument that will "...assess teacher and/or mentor behaviors and student behaviors" will provide quantitative and qualitative measures of teaching and learning activities, but no sample of this evaluative tool

was included to help determine the utility of the instrument for continuous improvement of teaching and student learning. On the other hand, it is probable that the data gleaned from the wide variety of instruments proposed for evaluation of this project can be used for timely feedback since assessment tools are being used throughout each project year and across the entire project grant period. Credentials regarding the external organization to be hired or the criteria for selection, the staff to be provided, or the organization's expertise in evaluating such a multi-faceted project are not included in the narrative, making it impossible to judge whether the LEA will be provided quality monitoring and reporting services for continuous improvement to occur in a judicious manner.

Thus, some of the requirements of a high-quality plan are described, but there is insufficient detail about responsible parties, deliverables, or specific evaluation procedures to determine whether this is a high-quality continuous improvement plan.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA plans to use every traditional available resource for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders including but not limited to the district website, posts in social media, the local newspaper and the local closed-circuit community television station, as well as Oregon Investment Board publications and publications of its business, civic, educational partners. A unique aspect of planned communications and engagement is the proposed Superintendent Winning the Future Town Halls to be held each year of the project. Bimonthly Project Advisory Council meetings will keep the council and other stakeholders regularly informed of the progress and achievements of the project. All of these plans for ongoing communication are achievable and have great potential for engaging a significant number of stakeholders. But, unlike many other aspects of the LEA's proposed project, this element has no mechanism for determining whether program information is getting to the people who need it and feedback is getting to the district for adjustments in program or public relations. The job description of the project director does not address this responsibility for ongoing communications and it does not appear to be assigned to anyone else.

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

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Over 20 different types of performance measures from state assessments in reading and math to teacher and student surveys and random student and parent interviews to measures of the district's graduation rate over the life of the project are planned. The rationale for the use of each measure is provided.

Measures from each of the required categories of students in grades PreK-3, 4-8, and 9-12 are all age-appropriate and will be used by the LEA. Thus, the LEA has many more than the required 12 to 14 performance measures. Indeed, managing and interpreting this vast array of data and the relevancy of each to continuous improvement will be worth examining as the project proceeds.

Tables with baseline scores and performance targets for students by subject area, grade, and by subgroup, during the grant period and beyond, were provided in an earlier section of the plan. Some of these baseline scores and performance targets are repeated with more specificity with regard to participating students as compared to disadvantaged students or subgroups in the next section of the proposal. The data gleaned from the wide variety of instruments proposed for evaluation of this project can be used for timely feedback since assessment tools are being used throughout each project year and across the entire project grant period, but there was no discussion in any section of the proposal as to how the LEA will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

Additionally, some of the measures, for example, the state assessments for reading and mathematics will provide rigorous, though only summative annual information. The LEA's forthcoming formative assessments will provide more frequent student achievement and growth data. But, it is difficult to determine the rigor and formative leading information that will be provided by other measures such as the still untested teacher and principal evaluation tools. The high school measures for 9th grade attendance and credit accumulation as well as 12th grade dual high school and college credit accumulation seem appropriate for measuring whether students are on-track for college and career preparedness but are not particularly discriminating tools for this purpose.

Thus, the LEA has an ambitious collection of performance measures, yet the rigor, timeliness and information to be provided by the individual instruments vary in quality and efficacy.

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

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA presented an extensive discourse explaining the attributes and distinguishing differences between cost analysis, cost-savings analysis, and cost-benefit analysis, ending disappointingly with the difficulties of conducting these kind of analyses to evaluate the worth and effectiveness of educational reforms such as those embodied in the RTTD grant. The LEA did reference relevant studies that show the impressive return on investment of early childhood pro-quality programs (25% of the RTTD budget of this project). But, the LEA's definitions of the different types of cost-benefit analysis is not a sufficient high-quality plan with staff responsibilities for evaluating the effectiveness of investments identified, deliverables, and timelines. No specific measures for this aspect of evaluating RTTD-funded activities such as professional development or activities that employ technology were presented. Thus, these critical attributes for a high-quality evaluation of investments were not present.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables, should identify RTTTD funds as well as district monies, grants, state and other Federal funds that will be used so that determinations can be made as to the reasonableness and sufficiency of requested monies and the rationale for same. The applicant is applying for \$19,999,502 million or at the maximum of \$20 million allowed for a district with between 5,000 to 10,000 students. This LEA has 6,650 students. Nearly \$21 million in funds from other sources will be used to support the project, including district General Funds, partnership funds, and Title I monies).

The LEA included a summary Budget Table of overall costs for personnel, travel, equipment, supplies, contracts, and training stipends followed by Budget Tables for the same costs for each of these components. Nearly 70% of the LEA's budget is for personnel costs, with nearly 30% for fringe benefits, raising concern regarding the amount of resources directed to high-need students of the program. Additionally, \$1 million is for teacher performance compensation. One-time costs and investments not required over all four years of the grant were also identified in the tables. For example, no costs for performance compensation appear in Years 1 and 2 of the proposed grant budget which is understandable since highly-effective teacher performance would need to be documented before this compensation could be awarded. But, it is not as understandable that computer hardware and software investments are only found in Year 1 of the budget. Technology changes so rapidly that it might be anticipated that software programs purchased in the first year of the grant would not be as useful in the fifth year of the grant. Certainly, breakage and lost technology resources such as hand-held one-to-one devices would call for replacement costs. However, the \$4 million allocation for technology included in the budget is not substantiated by any references to what is being purchased, how specific purchases will be used, or how such a large expenditure will increase equity for students with disabilities, English language learners or other high-need students. Alternatively, the LEA factored in reasonable cost of living increases as part of projected personnel expenses. And, also considered the fact should the LEA be awarded a grant, that some positions would not begin until the second semester of the academic year and so salaries for these positions were appropriately pro-rated.

Other costs not funded through RTTD monies were also identified, such as contractual expenditures and professional development. A strong aspect of the budget is that only about 50% of the project will be funded by RTTD funds, increasing the likelihood that some elements of the project could continue after RTTD funds are no longer available. The LEA provided a rationale for all costs, grant- and non-grant funded line items. Job descriptions for positions central to the project were also provided. Thus, the LEA met the criteria for a comprehensive, reasonable and sufficient budget by identifying funding sources and how each source would be used to facilitate its proposed project.

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

10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As previously indicated, commendably only about half the costs for this proposed project will be funded through RTTD monies. Yet, the necessity for a sound sustainability plan addressing how these funds will be replaced and others continued is still of utmost importance if program goals are to supported after the grant period. The LEA very creditably explained its plan.

First, the LEA clearly identified personnel positions and program components funded through non-grant monies during the grant period. The source of these non-grant funds was also identified such as Title I and community organization monies. Indeed, a strength of this LEA's budget, for the grant period and beyond, is the significant investment of community groups to the project, over \$500,000.00 each year of the grant.

Second, the LEA explained how RTTD monies will be replaced and non-grant monies, although it appears that some scenarios for substitute or ongoing funding have more potential than others. For example, it is more likely that seven community service clubs can be found to support the \$5,000 per year each required to keep the Ready for Kindergarten program of the project going, given past financial community support than it is for all contingencies of state support for district pre-school programs (approval for a fee-based program and re-allocation of remediation funds) to all fall in place as projected. Still, the applicant is commended for thoughtful consideration of possible options.

Third, as required by application guidelines, the LEA delineated its budget assumptions in clear language. On the other hand, as with the overall project evaluation plan, ways to evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget were not as obvious. Still, the LEA has submitted an otherwise thorough sustainability plan that includes support from state and local sources and an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Competitive Preference Priority calls for districts to integrate public and private resources in partnerships designed to augment school system resources to provide additional social, emotional, and behavioral supports to RTTTD grant participating students and their families who will also be served through the primary grant.

McMinnville will address this priority through collaboration with numerous existing community partners such as the Ready for Kindergarten program, Head Start, the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum, and local colleges and universities. For the most part, these historical partnerships are already providing additional student and family supports to the pupils and their schools. For example, the Ready for Kindergarten program provides child development workshops for parents and the community colleges provide dual accreditation teachers and college credit for students. These partnerships are briefly described in a table format that lists nearly 30 organizations supplementing the educational needs of McMinnville students and supporting their families. While each of these numerous organizations have potential, it is difficult to see how all of them will be integrated together and with school components and how the contributions and programs of this large number of organizations will be monitored for their individual and collective impact on student academic, emotional, and social growth.

Many of the performance measures embodied in the evaluation of the main project will be used to assess population-level results for this Priority. The LEA states that the same formative and summative assessments will be used to measure educational outcomes such as students prepared for college and careers. Measures of the main project such as tools to measure student preparedness for kindergarten are also aligned with the broader proposal. Proposed tools for measuring other Priority results such as “community stability” due to increased English fluency of adult parent learners are not defined and this kind of projected result will, in any event, probably be difficult to measure. Similarly, the 10 specific population-based desired results are not enumerated. It is not clear if the population-based measures identified in the Project Evaluation Plan are inclusive of the ten desired results for this Priority. In the same way, no description of how the partnerships build the capacity of school staff to assess the needs and assets of participating students was provided.

Yet, plans to use the Data Teams described in the main proposal to analyze indicator results to make adjustments to support programs are again outlined here and appear appropriate. The LEA states that partner representatives serving on the Project Advisory Council will also use data to track selected indicators so that resources can be used to improve results for participating students. A school district community audit conducted as part of the strategic planning is credited by the LEA with informing design of the pre-school components of the project, but no evidence of this is provided. It will be critical that plans for monitoring and reporting on the fidelity of these proposed operation strategies are followed through to ensure the integrity of the decision-making processes of the Council and district and for a complete and useful evaluation of supports.

The applicant thus has an ambitious, but not well-integrated plan for providing students with additional supports and does not provide compelling evidence that it can reach indicated goals.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
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Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The LEA began its proposal narrative by listing nine credible goals for achieving the objectives of accelerating student achievement, deepening learning, and establishing personalized learning. For example, one goal is to improve student learning by increasing teacher effectiveness through their use of job-embedded professional development, Rigorous Curriculum Design, and Power Strategies for Effective Teaching. Another is to increase kindergarten readiness, shown by research to improve long-term student achievement, by providing universal pre-kindergarten to all four-year-olds in the district. In later sections of the proposal, the LEA elaborates on these strategies and thereby tells how these goals will be met. And, a third is to create and sustain personalized learning environments founded in equity and characterized by rigor, relevance, and relationships.</p> <p>The LEA makes a sufficient case that its proposal builds on the four core educational assurance areas by documenting its adoption of the Common Core State Standards, formative and summative assessments, expansion of existing college- and career-ready programs for students, continued use of state and district data systems to measure student growth and performance, and establishment of new teacher performance and compensation systems for improved teaching for participating students. The LEA has also established target goals based on the state's growth model to decrease achievement gaps among student subgroups. The district has adopted the state's vision for increased high school and graduation rates and, as a result of the proposed RTTD initiative, projects that it will graduate students at a faster rate than the state average, while also increasing the number of students who enroll in post-secondary programs.</p> <p>This application was well-organized, effectively using the template for RTTT-D proposals and had clear cross-references from one component of the proposed plan to other components, as well as the appendices. The proposal was sometimes not completely coherent and comprehensive, but proposal intentions were reasoned, if in some places unconvincing.</p>		

Total	210	153
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Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0005OR-2 for McMinnville School District #40

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

McMinnville School District's *Winning the Future Project* exhibits a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that centers upon district initiatives that have achieved measurable success in the core educational assurance areas, while establishing a clear and credible pathway to deliver a comprehensive educational program within an equitable and personalized learning environment. The project is intended to increase student achievement, accelerate student growth, narrow and eliminate achievement gaps, and deepen student learning.

(a) In regards to the four core educational standards:

1. **(Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy)** The district has invested and continues to invest in significant resources in professional development focused upon a *Rigorous Curriculum Design* (RCD) that aligns the curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Common Core. The district has adopted professional development that enables the adjustment of rigor of RCD units to align with Priority Clusters on the Smarter Balance Assessments. These

assessments, which align with the Common Core State Standards, are designed to help prepare all students to graduate high school and attend college and/or to be career-ready. Data Teams have been adopted that ensure that students start and stay on schedule in moving toward proficiency through a model of data-driven customized interventions and enrichments. These Data Teams allow educators to successfully implement Professional Learning Communities to reach a higher achievement level with a focus upon individual students. Data Teams will develop targeted instruction for students to help them reach proficiency and academic enrichment.

2. **(Building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction)** Though the Data Teams utilize common formative and summative assessments that focuses on individual student data to improve instruction, the Oregon Department of Education uses a new system of accountability to evaluate the performance of schools. The system ranks public schools based on student achievement and growth on state assessments in reading and math. The district also uses the state's online data system and the online district data system, *Mastery in Motion*. The district tracks student growth on standard-based common formative and summative assessments throughout the year and over multiple years while using the Data Teams process and the *Mastery in Motion* database.
3. **(Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals)** A performance-based compensation system was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year in an effort to help promote recruitment, reward educators, and to retain effective teachers and administrators. The district is currently implementing a performance-based evaluation system for teachers and administrators that was aligned with recent Senate Bill 290 that was enacted in 2012 within Oregon. The evaluation features meets the RTTT definition of teacher and administrators evaluation that include the following features: Model Core Teaching Standards on both teachers and administrators should know to ensure that every student is ready for college, careers, and engaged citizenship; the four performance levels associated with the Standards of Professional Practice; the use of multiple data sources; a regular teacher and administrator evaluation cycle that fosters continuous improvement; and relevant professional learning opportunities. In an effort to promote teacher and administrative effectiveness, the district has implemented professional development that focuses upon the mastery of three foundational frameworks for teaching and learning: Rigorous Curriculum; Data Teams; and Power Strategies for Effective Teaching.
4. **(Turning around lowest achieving schools)** Not applicable as the district's nine schools are not deemed low-performing or among the lowest-achieving schools, as defined by RTTT.

(b) Articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests:

Winning the Future Project Goals:

- Increase teacher and administrator effectiveness through staff development as referenced in the three foundational frameworks of teaching and learning.
- Implement a performance-based evaluation system for teachers, principals, and the superintendent that meets all RTTT requirements.
- Recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and administrators through a performance-based compensation that ties into student achievement, student growth, leadership duties, and classroom observations.
- Foster and accelerate healthy child development by implementing a *Ready for Kindergarten* program to provide development instruction, coaching, resources, and support for parents of economically disadvantaged, English learners, and other high-needs children to age five.
- Increase kindergarten readiness by providing universal pre-kindergarten to all four-years-old and extended-day and extended-year kindergarten for high-needs students.
- Increase parental engagement in schooling, family literacy, financial literacy, and adult educational attainment by providing wraparound educational services for at-risk parents, students, and families.
- Increase student achievement, narrow achievement gaps among student subgroups, and accelerate student growth.
- Increase the graduation rate and postsecondary enrollment and completion rates.
- Create and sustain personalized learning environments founded in equity and characterized by rigor, relevance, and relationships

The five conceptual clusters as referenced in the U.S... Department of Education in *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance--Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century* are embedded in the project's design. In addition, the personalized learning environments that will be created and sustained in the project will foster 21st Century competencies.

(c) Describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers:

The strategies and structure of the project will include a sustain personalized learning environments that are equitable and learner-centered. A major focus will be placed upon the interest of students as the design and development of lessons will reflect their active participation. Students will develop skills to use the appropriate technology, tools, and resources to

support and enhance learning in a self-directed manner as they will drive the learning process.

The teacher's role in a personalized learning environment will be to collect and analyze data to understand how each student learns and to ensure that students have a personal understanding of their own metacognitive processes. In this type of learning environment, teachers will assume more of a role as a facilitator to help guide and support students as they develop their personalized learning goals and to help monitor their progress toward achieving benchmarks.

Summary: The criterion listed and referenced in the applicant's plan supports a comprehensive and coherent vision that addresses the core standards and promotes the implementation of personalized learning environments. The plan focused upon the importance of key stakeholders with emphasis with teachers and administrators supporting the need to utilize technology effectively while applying professional development that will ultimately lead to increased student achievement.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) A description of the process that the applicant used or will use to select schools to participate. The process must ensure that the participating schools (as defined in this notice) collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements:

The district included all schools in the project as they each met the competition's eligibility requirement.

(b) A list of the schools that will participate in grant activities:

The district provided a chart that identified all nine participating schools.

(c) The total number of participating students (as defined in this notice), participating students (as defined in this notice) from low-income families, participating students (as defined in this notice) who are high-need students (as defined in this notice), and participating educators (as defined in this notice).

The chart included demographic related data for each school (e.g., teachers, students, low-income students, total school population, and percentage of participants/low-income students).

Summary:

It was apparent that the district described rationale, data and criteria that fully described the selection process, which included the inclusion of all district schools.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As the entire district, which includes nine separate schools, will participate in this project the district referenced that all grade levels and content areas will be included in this plan; therefore, the district did not include a scale-up plan due to the full participation of all schools.

In addressing this area, the district developed a theory of change logic model that was designed in a table format. The areas addressed in this reform mode included the following topics:

- Educator Effectiveness Strategies
- Leverage and Impact Outcomes
- Intermediate Outcomes
- Long Range Outcomes
- Preventive Strategies
- Instructional Triage and Intervention Strategies

The Educator Effectiveness Strategies that were identified in the proposal were stated in a brief statement format that referenced three areas: Staff development and coaching; new teacher mentoring; and a performance-based evaluation and compensation system.

The Leverage and Impact Outcomes were identified and included the following areas: Increase the number of certified teachers and administrators; implementation of a performance-based evaluation teachers and administrators; initial investments for program development, building capacity, and restructure learning environments, while minimizing recurring operating costs; an increase in kindergarten readiness and a reduction in the percentage of students requiring remediation after the third grade; reducing remediation costs through systematic monitoring of student performance data; and shifting of funds gained be the reduction of remediation to support prevention and enrichment components

The Intermediate Outcomes were stated to be increased in the following areas: Percentage of students impacted by highly-effective teachers and principals, performing at or above proficiency in reading and math; accelerate student growth; narrow the achievement gap among student subgroups; increase in dual high school/college credits earned; increase in proficiency based credit; increase in bilingual literacy; increase in kindergarten readiness; and decrease the number of students entering kindergarten with developmental deficits.

The Long Range Outcomes were identified under the listing of eight **achievement of the project goals**:

1. Increase teacher and administrative effectiveness
2. Implement a performance-based evaluation
3. Recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and administrators
4. Foster and accelerate healthy child development
5. Increase kindergarten readiness
6. Increase parental engagement in schooling, family literacy, financial literacy, and adult educational attainment
7. Increase student achievement, narrow achievement gaps, and accelerate student growth
8. Create and sustain personalized learning environments characterized by rigor, relevance, and relationships.

The Preventive Strategies included the following areas: Kindergarten readiness; universal pre-school; extended-day kindergarten; extended-day and extended-year instruction, intervention, and academic enrichment; and wraparound parent and family educational services

The Instructional Triage and Intervention Strategies that were stated included the following: Data teams to monitor student performance and to provide timely and customized interventions; push-in and pull-out customized reading interventions and supplemental reading instruction at various grades; supplemental math workshops and double-block algebra; and an extended-day and extended-year in reading and math intervention programs.

I believe that these referenced strategies will enable the district to move toward meeting their outcome goals.

WEAKNESS

In addressing areas of focus within this outcome related topic the applicant did not use measurable indicators (e.g., specific percentages or numbers to be either increased or decreased); therefore, it was difficult to determine the actual goals or outcomes that would occur from the implementation of the applicant's plan.

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

As indicated, the applicant stated that they have experienced growth in student proficiency rates on state assessments among all subgroups since the implementation of Rigorous Curriculum Design Data Teams, and Power Strategies. A table was provided by the applicant that identified key goals that included specific information that related to activities, timeline, deliverables and key personnel who would be responsible to implement each goal. The key goals that were identified by the applicant included the following areas:

- Hire a project director
- Formalize a project advisory committee
- Identify the external evaluation team
- Establish a systematic evaluation system
- Collaboration on the project's implementation
- Develop annual performance reports
- Project communications
- Implement educator effectiveness strategies
- Implement personalized learning environment strategies

WEAKNESS

In referencing the plan's implementation, there wasn't included specific information that identified the minimal requirements (e.g., education, related experiences, skills, etc.) or job description/duties of the project director's position. In referencing the establishment of a Project Advisory Committee, a reference was made to this groups need to meet regularly and to analyze data; however, this information was non-specific, undefined and vague. In referencing the responsible parties to implement components of the plan under the topic of Key Personnel, the positions were undefined and vague (e.g., district leadership, key project personnel, internal and external evaluators, key building communicators, teachers, educational technology, technology department, administrators, and students). This area of the plan didn't reflect well stated ambitious and achievable goals.

(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth)

In regards to the state assessment, the applicant uses the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills for baseline and Smarter Balance for Goals. The methodology for determining status as indicated is the percentage of students at or above proficiency. The applicant enclosed a chart that indicated the value-added annual growth in individual students on the state assessments in reading and math, using the Oregon Growth Model with targets for each assessed grade: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 11th. Listed as subgroups by the applicant included the following learners: Hispanic, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps

The applicant referenced specific methodology for determining achievement gap was specified for each assessed grade in reading or language arts and in mathematics. As indicated by the applicant, the gap between the proficiency rate of all students and student subgroups on the state assessments in reading and math at each assessed grade was included. In addition, targets representing a narrowing of existing achievement gaps were listed. Information within this category didn't address specifically how a decrease in achievement gaps would happen.

(c) Graduation rates

The applicant referenced and addressed this area with a chart that listed the graduation rates in accordance with each mentioned subgroup. As there wasn't a narrative that addressed this area, the information was nonspecific and vague with no indication how the plan would increase and improve upon the graduation rate.

(d) College enrollment rates

The applicant referenced this area as a chart listed the graduation rates in accordance with each mentioned subgroup.

(e) Postsecondary degree attainment

The applicant's methodology for postsecondary attainment included the percentage of all students who earned a degree within six years of high school.

WEAKNESS:

In these sections (a-e), the district didn't include a narrative overview which would have provided clarity to the criterion (e.g., goal area, subgroups and goals) that was listed on the provided chart. Also, the summary data that was referenced only identified the subjects using percentages; therefore, enrollment figures for each group was not listed.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps , including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates , and college enrollment rates.

McMinnville School District has indicated a record of success in increasing student achievement and narrowing the achievement gaps, as indicated through various indicators. In accordance with the state's newly implemented accountability system that ranks public schools based on student achievement, growth, subgroup growth, and graduation rates. In the latest state's ranking (2013), four schools have been ranked at the highest category Level 5, four schools ranked as Level 4, and the high school ranked Level 3 placing it in the state's top 50% of all high schools. The district has made significant progress in narrowing achievement gaps among student subgroups while increasing student achievement. The district has outpaced state averages in achievement gap areas despite being one of the state's highest poverty districts with a high proportional enrollment of English Learners. The dual high school/college credit program has expanded while attracting Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students at a number equivalent to the general student population.

(b) Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its low-performing schools.

As noted by the district, it does not have any low performing or lowest achieving schools as defined by RTTT.

(c) Make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

The district systematically uses student performance data to target instruction, customize interventions, provide enrichment, and to keep students and parents informed. Parents have access to grades and data on an ongoing basis through internet access. Also, support is provided to those parents who lack technology and internet access. Data teams are well utilized to systematically process student performance data on standard-based formative and interim assessments to target instruction and customized interventions.

WEAKNESS

The following statement applies to section (b) of this question: Through the district's own admission the high school ranked as a Level 3 rating; therefore, this school would be considered as the district's lowest achieving school. As related to this topic and as the plan lacks the inclusion of the high school, it could possibly indicate that a need to implement reform or changes to improve this mid-level ranking may not be a priority in the district.

The district didn't provide evidence that parents are accessing student data (c) via internet either from their own computers or through the utilization of school supported technology. Also, it was referenced that academic information can be shared during parent/teacher conferences in November and April; however, there was no evidence or data that supported this statement.

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

The McMinnville School District utilizes the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that includes school-level expenditures that include those listed:

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

In addition, the district is part of the Open Book Project which provides the public with an open look at school funding that is included in an easily understandable manner using graphs and charts. All communication of this nature is also available and communicated by the district in both English and Spanish. In summary, it would appear that in regards to transparency that the district does demonstrate a high regard to the processes and practice of this topic.

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

As indicated by the applicant, they maintain compliance with all Oregon laws, administrative rules, statutes, and regulations governing the operations of K-12 public schools. In accordance with the state's law and regulations, the applicant will have sufficient autonomy to fully implement the strategies and structures to support personalized learning environments that are referenced in the project. As a pilot district, Oregon Senate Bill 252 has allowed the district to implement a performance-based evaluation system to monitor student achievement. Other specific components of the project that have gained support through various legal initiatives and reforms include the implementation of a teacher and principal performance-based evaluation system, credit by proficiency, extended-day and full day kindergarten, criterion-referenced and performance-based assessments of students performance, and the establishment of college enrollment goals statewide.

Though the state has created an opportunity to allow districts to apply autonomous practices, while in compliance of legal, statutory and regulatory requirements, it is evident that the district has developed an understanding of the flexibility that it possess in creating innovative and successful strategies and programs, such as the implementation of personalized learning environments, in their proposal and efforts to increase student achievement.

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

(a) A description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback:

The project reflected a comprehensive community-wide supportive effort. Initially, the district was able to render support

from the Oregon's Department of Education and from the city mayor. The applicant then developed a Design Team, which included representation from various stakeholders in the district (e.g., teachers, administrators, teachers' and union representation). The Design Team collaborated on all elements of the project's design and sought extensive input from parents, students, partners, and other stakeholders. In addition, a focus to increase student participation in the process was indicated through a survey of more than 500 high school students and interviews with groups of students. Also, the superintendent interviewed recent high school graduates to get their feedback on their schooling and educational experiences in the district with emphasis on how well they were prepared to pursue career or college plans.

(b) Letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education:

The applicant included myriad letters (50+) from various stakeholders who demonstrated a collaborative and supportive agreement in regards to the project. The abundance of letters that were included in the proposal indicated a significant level of support from stakeholders within the district who represent various civic and community organizations.

WEAKNESS

The applicant did not show evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from the participating schools support the proposal.

The Design Team indicated that it sought input from parents, students, partners, and other stakeholders; however, it was not stated how this was accomplished (e.g., number of meetings, location and dates/times of meetings, number of participants at these sessions, and etc.).

In regards to the superintendent's interviewing sessions with past graduates, it was not indicated the number of individuals interviewed, the specific questions asked, or their responses during these sessions.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In the Winning the Future Project, the applicant included a high-quality plan and evidence for improving student achievement by personalizing the learning environment to foster rigor, relevance, and relationships through a broad range of approaches. The Project Implementation Plan included goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The applicant included various measure to provide training and support to students that will contribute to their success academically and ability to track and manage their learning. A list and description of the core components of the project to engage and empower all learners, particularly high-needs students, to successfully complete a rigorous course of study that aligns to career and college ready standards included the following areas:

- Kindergarten readiness
- Universal half-day pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds
- Positive Behavior and Instructional Supports to improve school culture and climate, foster engagement and social/emotional development
- Balanced literacy approach with intensive interventions in pre-k-3rd grade
- Balanced math approach in K-12th grade
- Wraparound family services
- Comprehensive educational programs pre-k-13/14 grade
- Standards-based teaching and learning cycle
- Common formative, interim, and summative assessments
- Technology-rich teaching and learning within digital learning environments
- Personalized Learning Goals
- Multicultural and culturally competent curriculum
- Dual Language Immersion
- Systematic monitoring and keeping students informed on related matters
- STEM and STEAM intensive teaching and learning
- Digital learning environments

- Credit by Proficiency coursework
- Extended learning programs for K-12th grade students
- Supplemental reading instruction and support
- Dual high school/college credit coursework
- Career Pathway coursework
- Smaller Learning Communities
- ASPIRE college mentoring
- College Seminar Classes
- Grade 13/14 College Transition Program
- Performance-Based Assessments
- Career and Life Role Education curriculum

In addressing this section of the grant, the core components, as noted, covered not only significant academic areas (e.g., school readiness, math, reading, literacy, technology, etc.), but also extended to socio and developmental components of a student's growth with an extended focus upon college and career readiness.

WEAKNESS

There appeared to be a lack of information in this section to identify those individuals or positions responsible to facilitate these programs and to ensure that data is being collected and assessed to provide meaningful feedback on the success of these initiatives and programs toward meeting students needs. In addition, it was unclear that these program overviews actually addressed the elements that were listed in this area:

- Develop deep learning experiences
- Master critical academic content such as communication, goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, creativity and problem-solving
- Providing ongoing student support and training

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

The project is founded on an approach to help and support educators to improve and increase their capacity to ensure student progress and academic achievement while meeting career and college-ready standards by enabling the full implementation of personalized teaching and learning for all students.

Project strategies and structures that will contribute to the effectiveness of educators includes:

- A performance-based evaluation system for teachers and administrators, including the superintendent, that is fair and transparent. System features in these evaluation processes will include focus on the following areas: Standards of Professional Practice; Differential Performance Levels; Multiple Measures; Evaluation and Professional Growth Cycle; and Aligned and Differential Professional Learning

The teacher and administrator evaluation was conveyed in a cycle format that included the following components: Self-Reflection; Goal Setting; Observation and Collection of Evidence; Formative Evaluation; and Summative Evaluation. As an outcome of these evaluations, the following types of data will be collected annually to develop targeted professional development areas: Teacher proficiency ratings on the InTASC standards; teacher self-reported professional learning and development needs; online professional development needs survey; and building leadership team and site council identified needs.

WEAKNESS:

The plan though it referenced the evaluation and professional growth cycle format, it didn't identify the responsible parties or the specifics of what constitutes an observation (e.g., full period, walk-through, etc.). The district didn't clearly describe how the administration will be involved with the development and implementation of a high quality evaluation plan and within an established or defined time frame.

In regards to a research-based model of professional development, a reference was made to mentoring support for new teachers that included job-embedded instructional coaching, training in Power Strategies for Effective Teaching and other activities; however, there was no information that pertained to the requirements and selection process of mentors.

The McMinnville School District's professional development plan includes the following framework:

- Rigorous Curriculum deign
- Power Strategies for Effective Teaching
- Power Strategies to Activate Learning
- Power Strategies to Engage the Learner
- Power Strategies to Strengthen Literacy
- Data Teams/Common Formative Assessments
- Technology rich teaching and learning
- Research-based model of professional development
- Embedded staff development in professional learning communities
- Data teams
- Job-embedded instructional coaching
- Advanced degrees and licensures

As all teachers, administrators, counselors, and librarians will be required to participate in the district's embedded staff development training, this will significantly contribute to the successful implementation of implementing personalized learning environments and ensuring initiating and sustaining a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure , to provide support and services to all participating schools:

The McMinnville School District's central office is organized to support the entire district and all of their schools. The applicant provide a leadership chart that identified the roles and responsibilities of the following positions relevant to the project's goals:

- Board of Directors
- Superintendent
- Human Resource Director
- Administrative Council (e.g., building administrators, principals and assistant principals)
- Building Leadership Teams and Site Councils
- Teacher Leaders

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducational, and school-level budgets:

A Building Leadership Team has been developed in each school within the district consisting of administrators, teachers, and site council representatives. These teams have great autonomy regarding various factors of the school (e.g., school schedules, personnel decisions, staffing models, roles and responsibilities of personnel, and budget). The role and responsibilities that have been identified within these leadership teams, who consist of a diverse population of the school community, will contribute to the assurance that the plan is high-quality and will meet success.

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic:

The Credit by Proficiency is a major component of the project. This entity includes such areas as credit recovery and mastery of Common Core standards. Also, proficiency-based teaching and learning helps to build upon and enhance standards-based education through student-centered instruction, standard-based learning, and student engagement.

WEAKNESS:

This identified credit recovery component, though it will contribute to the recovery of courses and more of a mastery of Common Core standards, it doesn't reflect elements, learning strategies, adaptability components, and content that would be considered in the development of a high-quality plan.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways:

As indicated by the applicant, problem-based and collaborative learning opportunities will provide students a vehicle to demonstrate their mastery of standards at various times and in multiple ways.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners:

The district stated that the project identifies Power Strategies for Effective Teaching and technology-rich teaching and learning that are designed to help increase achievement and accelerate learning among students, with an effort to assist particularly students with disabilities and English Learners. However, there was no direct evidence to support how these strategies would work to accomplish these goals. Also stated by the district was that the personalized learning environments that will be developed within the plan will contribute to increased academic success that will include serving the diverse needs of the district's students; however, I believed the plan lacked specific information that addressed adaptability with learning materials to ensure meeting the needs of all students.

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

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Ensuring that all participating students , parents, educators , and other stakeholders , regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal:

The project is designed to be implemented in all schools, grade levels, and content areas within the district. The project components will include economically disadvantaged and other at-risk students. The program will be implemented in each school; therefore, students will not be bused to other locations to be served. Also, bus transportation will be district provided for all students in the regular school's time frame and from all extended learning opportunities, such as before or after school programs, Saturday sessions, and summer programs, in accordance with federal transportation regulations.

(b) Ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies (e.g., peer support, online support, or local support):

The family resource centers at each school will render technology access and support for students who would not have such access from their home; also these centers will afford assistance to parents and families that will include instruction in both English and Spanish. The district will provide technical support for all project components that includes online coursework, database access, and intervention programs. The personnel within the schools will be rendered support through the District Technology Department and through instructional coaching and embedded staff development.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records):

As indicated by the applicant, parents and students can access information from the district's database by any device with an internet connection. The database has information that includes student performance on activities or assignments, grades, assessment scores, attendance, and other information referenced by a student's teacher as deemed relevant. Families not having internet access can download student performance data at the school using district-provided technology. In addition, parent teacher conferences enable opportunities for parents to discuss their child's academic performance.

WEAKNESS:

There is basically no assurance that parents without internet access will make efforts to seek technological support or assistance in accessing the district's website and database. In addition, there was no specific reference to providing a website or database location that would be exceptionally user friendly, easy to navigate, and the information that is provided in conveyed in a manner or format that can be understood by all parents regardless of their academic or reading level.

(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use inter operable data systems (e.g., systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data).

The district's database, eschool, is linked with the Mastery In Motion and Cognos databases that are used by the district. Data can be tracked, compiled and collected by using multiple filters and levels (e.g., district, school, classroom, teacher, student, and subgroup levels).

WEAKNESS:

The applicant didn't identify who would be responsible for monitoring this data system, assisting stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators, etc.) and ensuring that the this component of the plan is successful in communication significant information to all parties; therefore, I believe the plan lacked information ensuring adequate technology support in the plan's delivery.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

McMinnville School District's plan features a continuous cycle of monitoring, measuring, and disseminating information. The district will use an external and objective evaluation team to perform comprehensive formative, interim, and summative evaluations that will include both qualitative and quantitative measures. The intent of this evaluation process will help to assess the effectiveness and cost-benefit of project strategies, to evaluate the implementation of individual components, to support reporting and accountability requirements, to provide guidance about effective products and practices, and to conduct a systematic, multi-factor, cost-benefit assessment that incorporate optimal progress performance indicators.

The evaluation team will render the following duties and benefits:

- Conduct extensive site observations
- Analyze student performance data
- Conduct stakeholder surveys and interviews
- Formulate an interim and summative report

Other supportive outcomes and areas of support that will generate from this area will include the following: Instructional; social/emotional; career and college readiness; and student, parent, and family support. Project services and activities will be evaluated using an observation instrument that assesses teacher and/or mentor, and student behaviors. The evaluation process will provide timely feedback to project leadership and staff to facilitate project modifications and improvements by objective data.

The evaluation process has the structure and resources to enable it to provide ongoing data and feedback that will assess the project on a regular and ongoing basis. In conclusion, the applicant enclosed a project evaluation plan in a chart format that included the following categories: Goals, indicators and timelines.

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

The district has established a communication plan to disseminate information about the plan that will utilize the district's websites, a project's website linked to the district's home page, district posts on social media, regular occurring articles and reports to be published in the community's newspaper, *The McMinnville News Register*, aired on the McMinnville Community Media, Oregon Education Investment Board publications, through various postsecondary and business/industry partners, regional educational organization meetings, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon School Board Association, the Oregon Education Association, in presentations at state and regional conferences, and in the Annual Performance Report and the external evaluation report. A video production through SOAR Productions will be produced that highlights the project's objectives and goals, which will be updated periodically and posted on the project website.

The superintendent will host a Winning the Future Project Town Hall session yearly to deliver a state of the project presentation. In addition, regular communications and engagement will occur bimonthly at the Project Advisory Council meetings. The minutes and artifacts of council meetings will be posted on the project's website and available as hard copies upon requests. Also, a variety of meetings and settings will enable communication updates on the project that will include: school board meetings, Administrative Cabinet and Council meetings, school-based staff meetings, Building Leadership Team meetings, and site council meetings. It is evident that the district has made efforts to utilize a significant number and well-represented group of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the plan. Also in this area of ongoing communication and engagement, a high-quality plan has been established that will keep all stakeholders well informed throughout this timeframe.

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

The plan's performance measures were described as ambitious yet achievable as indicators have been selected to facilitate the process through the use of rigorous, timely, and formative data. The applicant hopes to evaluate the project's success toward achieving its outcomes, make modifications, address weaknesses and to achieve or adapt project and student levels accordingly. A chart was enclosed that addressed the various project's core Performance Measures, based on the following two categories: Measures & Purpose/Rationale. In regards to topics or actions that were referenced in the Measures, the following topics were included by the applicant:

Teacher and administrator performance-based and compensation evaluations or plans; teacher and administrator surveys; interviews; percentage of students with effective teachers; state assessment scores in reading and math; attendance; child behavior rating scale; dual high school/college credits; post-secondary enrollment rate; post-secondary completion rate; student surveys and randomized student interviews; and partner surveys and interviews.

Also, other performance measures charts were included that identified additional performance measure indicators and the applicable population of students in the target group that separated data relating to the various levels (e.g., pre-K-3, Grades 4-8, and Grades 9-12, and etc.).

WEAKNESS:

The descriptive information that was conveyed in the Performance Measures chart listed various measures that were often nonspecific and vague:

- Teacher and administrator surveys (e.g., what teachers and administrators, type of survey, how often, etc.)
- Teacher and administrator randomized interviews (e.g., what teachers and administrators, type of interview questions, how often, etc.)
- Percentage of students with highly effective teachers (e.g., what group or subgroup of students, what academic areas will be included or excluded, etc.)

The purpose and measures are also stated in a manner that does not seem to be specific as they lack **timeframes** and **responsible parties** with each identified measure. I believe that the method of addressing this area did not always include a clear and high-quality approach as noted in these remarks.

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

The applicant centered upon the area of cost analysis as an initial approach to gage the program's benefits as compared to the amount of resources required to invest in different types of programs. The cost-savings analysis focuses upon the cost of the programs compared to the monies saved by government, focusing both on the outcome and the dollar value of that outcome. The return on investment was a key consideration in designing the Winning Future Project, which will leverage district general funds, RTTT funds, and other resources to create a seamless connection reflecting a world-class system of education that builds on current district initiatives demonstrated to be highly effective. The project will utilize highly efficient service models, invest in strategies and structures with the highest rates of return on investment, and provide sustainability through the following components of the plan that will be evaluated systematically:

- Investment in early childhood education and parent education and support
- Support of community partners
- Technology playing a key role
- Investment in professional development
- Teaching FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)

WEAKNESS:

There needed to be a better focus on the delivery of high-quality in the area of technology and staff development. The plan lacked specific information that would reflect that these two areas did not include the resources, total administrative/teacher support, staff development emphasis, and the technology to successfully implement and sustain.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided both an overall project-level budget summary and a narrative that identified the various budget categories that included the following areas: Direct and indirect costs, itemized cost expenditures, salary descriptors, personnel projections and benefits, travel costs, equipment, supplies, contractual considerations, training stipends, a listing of funds from other sources, and a total budget that was listed and described separately for each of the four years of the project.</p> <p>A description and explanation of the funds and expenditures were referenced in the applicant's budget. The budget information that was submitted also appeared to justify the expenditures of the project in a fair, reasonable and appropriate manner; with the noted exceptions. In addition, the applicant included a well developed plan that should contribute to the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments as indicated within the grant proposal.</p> <p>WEAKNESS:</p> <p>There appears to be a discrepancy between the cost allocated for Personnel (\$8,704,689) and those for Fringe Benefits (\$5,187,547); this reflects an unrealistic contrast between these two categories.</p> <p>Approximately 29% of the district's total budget proposal (\$40,863,311) is being earmarked for these two area (Personnel & Fringe Benefits).</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant referenced that approximately 51% of the project's costs will be funded by non-grant sources. Also, the one-time costs or short-terms costs to build long-term site capacity for sustainability represent approximately 33% of the grant's budget, with plans to sustain operational costs that will be funded through the grant in year-five and beyond. The applicant also described a sustainability plan in years five to seven. The budget identified and listed one-time and short-term investments as these were detailed in the budget narrative. A funding source chart was utilized to identify the funding source and timeframe of the expenditure. The majority of this revenue will come from the district's general fund with allocations also coming from possible state funds. The rationale for each investment in the project was provided in the detailed narrative overview. In addition, the applicant identified partnership funds that will also contribute to the project's sustainability with allocations identified from the following sources though not listed were possible Title I funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready for Kindergarten volunteer instructors • Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum • Kids On the Block afterschool program • McMinville Rotary grant for Ready for Kindergarten • Spirit Mountain Community Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten • Target Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten • Autzen Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten <p>WEAKNESS:</p> <p>In view of sustainability, there are indicators from those committed organizations that appear to support the proposal and the district. However, in today's unstable economy it is most difficult to predict sustainability and existence of organizations with any certainty. In addition, leadership change is most common in organizations; therefore, such a change could indeed lead to less or discontinued support of the proposal and district. In view of this topic, the district did not indicate these considerations and possible factors.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The McMinnville School District has established cooperative and sustainable partnerships that will ultimately contribute to the project's funding source and long-term success. Partnerships have been established with the following groups:

- Ready for Kindergarten volunteer instructors
- McMinnville Education Foundation
- Yamhill County Head Start
- McMinnville School District staff
- Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum
- Kids On the Block afterschool program
- McMinnville Rotary grant for Ready for Kindergarten
- Spirit Mountain Community Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten
- Target Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten
- Autzen Foundation for Ready for Kindergarten
- Oregon State University providing curriculum and instructors for STEM afterschool elementary program

Partnerships rendering support in the project component of STEM and STEAM intensive teaching and learning include the following:

- KOIN TV
- Sony
- McMinnville Water and Light
- Yamhill County-Miller Woods
- Yamhill Soil and Water District
- City of McMinnville-Metzger Park

Partnerships rendering support in the project component of Career Pathway learning include the following:

- McMinnville Chamber of Commerce
- Willamette Valley Medical Center
- Spirit Mountain Casino
- Cascade Steel Freelin-Wade
- Express Employment Professionals

Partnerships rendering support in the project component of dual high school/college enrollment include the following:

- Chemeketa Community College
- Portland Community College
- Mt. Hood Community College
- ASPIRE Oregon
- McMinnville Chamber of Commerce

Partnerships rendering support in the project component of Family Resource Centers include the following:

- Chemeketa Community College
- McMinnville Chamber of Commerce
- McMinnville Education Foundation

In the realm of competitive preference priority, the district identified the following population groups: Parents and children birth to age-five (increase parental knowledge to foster healthy child development); children birth to age-five (increase the percentage of kindergarten readiness in children); Pre K children (increase children performing at or above grade level in reading and math by grade three); and adult learners (English fluency for EL and increase technology skills). The types of results that were identified for these groups included the following areas; Child and youth health; educational; and community stability

The performance measures for partnership components to address the competitive preference priority are specific, measurable, achievable, rigorous, relevant, and time-framed. The partner representatives will serve on the Project Advisory Council that is designed to help analyze data aligned with the performance targets and indicators, and to assess the implementation of the core components of the project. The Project Advisory Council will disseminate information to all partners following meetings that will include the data aligned with the project performance indicators.

The applicant has stated that 100% of participants in the age-targeted child development workshops will be parents of children, birth to age-five, with one or more subgroup characteristics qualifying them as high-needs. In addition, priority

enrollment will be given to families on the Head Start wait list.

Project partnership components will be implemented district-wide in all the schools. There is no scale-up within the LEA.

The early learning partnership components are designed to improve results over time and support all project performance objectives. The partnerships featured in the project will integrate education and other services by providing wraparound services to all stakeholders.

The applicant identified partnership components that will address student needs and assets as indicated in a chart. This chart referenced the partnership activity, indicators, and purpose of these components.

A community audit will be performed to ensure that the plan is on target and meeting the needs of the community and the variety of resources to support those needs are addressed. The audit will help to provide the district with a better understanding of the educational, social, and economic needs of the community and the resources needed to warrant success. The audit outcomes will help to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the plan.

In the decision-making process, performance measure data will be used to help customize interventions based on student needs and to accelerate learning.

The project evaluation cycle will ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of all project structures, strategies, and outcomes based on identified measures and indicators to maximize project impact and inform and develop modifications, as needed.

The applicant enclosed, a competitive preference priority chart that referenced performance measures applicable to the following populations through each year of the plan with target goals:

- All participants
- English Learners
- Economically Disadvantaged Hispanic
- Students with Disabilities

WEAKNESS:

As myriad community agencies were referenced a memorandum of understanding with these agencies was not provided by the applicant.

Also, though the district's goals relevant to percentage increases were at times quite lofty, these increases (goals) often tended to be unrealistic.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
It was evident that the applicant created a well designed plan that coherently and comprehensively addressed the core educational areas while creating and supporting the development of personalized learning environments. The plan's design and development included a focus on teaching and learning that will promote college and career ready standards and increase academic achievement.		
Total	210	171

**Race to the Top - District
Technical Review Form**



Application #0005OR-3 for McMinnville School District #40

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a comprehensive, research-based reform vision that is grounded in alignment with the Common Core State Standards, its state's "From Goal to Reality: 40/40/20" strategies, and a commitment to utilize data systems for improving instruction. The vision makes sense as a foundation for the proposal; the challenge will be to integrate the project's components into a coherent, integrated framework.

Assessments include common formative assessments for all grade levels and content areas, designed by the district's educators, and the use of the district's Mastery in Motion data system. The district already has a performance-based evaluation system for teachers and administrators and utilizes the Rigorous Curriculum Design model, data teams, and practices outlined in Power Strategies for Effective Teaching. Their job-embedded instructional coaching model is augmented with 1:1 mentoring for novice teachers. Universal pre-Kindergarten and extended day/year for at risk Kindergarten students will be implemented along with wraparound services for at-risk parents, students, and families.

The applicant describes a clear approach to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase equity through the creation and support of personalized learning environments that are characterized by rigor, relevance, and relationships. The core components include appropriate technology-rich STEM and STEAM teaching and learning, problem/project based/experiential learning and design thinking, PBIS, culturally competent CIA, smaller learning communities at grade nine, and providing support for successful college/career transitions through College Seminar coursework and ASPIRE mentoring. Grit, tenacity, and perseverance will be taught and fostered, and a growth mindset will be nurtured.

The classroom experience in the applicant's personalized learning environments will involve students actively monitoring their own progress and taking increased ownership and responsibility for their learning. Teachers will facilitate all students setting personalized learning goals, monitor their progress, and implement a flexible array of instructional strategies that will utilize an array of assessments.

The response to (A)(1) earns a score of nine points based on the applicant's comprehensive research-based vision for improving their educators' effectiveness and their student's achievement through developing more effective and equitable personalized learning environments. It is not awarded the full 10 points as it is not yet clear if the constellation of components form a coherent approach in the minds of students, teachers, families and the community.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will include all of the district's schools in its RTT/D-funded reform project, based on the high level of need district-wide; it was the decision of a broad-based Design Team that is committed to assuring equity in the program's benefits to students throughout the district. Within each school,

according to Table A, there is a high percentage of students from low income families (45% to 85.6, with a district composite of 60.3%) and a fairly high percentage of English Language Learners -- 16% to 36% at the elementary level -- with the one high school only recording 4.9% in that same category.

Although details were not provided (for instance regarding the number of representatives from each group and school), the project Design Team includes teachers, administrators, union representatives, business partners, parents, students, and other stake-holders. All participating schools are listed by name and the schools' demographics are described in a table. There is a lack of clarity as to why Memorial School, with only 50% of its students from economically disadvantaged families (though still a significant percentage), will benefit from the RTT/D project as much as Buel Elementary School with 85.6% low income students. Although the inclusion of all the district's schools was decided on the basis of assuring equity, it appears that schools such as Buel have a much higher percentage of high needs students than others and thus may need far more targeted resources.

Thus, while this section (A)(2) outlines an overall understandable approach to implementation, the score of 8 out of 10 points is due to the highest need schools (with the larger percentages of high risk students) apparently receiving the same RTT/D resources as those with a lower percentage of such students. That is, equitable resources and opportunities for all students and all schools appears laudable; however, the district's school profiles document a wide range of levels of neediness suggesting the need for a more targeted implementation plan.

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

Since the applicant's Winning the Future RTT/D funded project will be implemented in all of its schools, at all grade levels, and in all content areas, there is not an issue regarding scaling up to non-identified schools in the district. Table C includes an outline its theory of change regarding how each identified strategy will leverage and impact short, intermediate, and long range outcomes, most of which were previously described in (A)(1). This chart also includes helpful preventative strategies, including Universal Preschool, extended K-12 day/year intervention and enrichment opportunities, and more comprehensive wraparound parent and family services.

It is not clear whether the extended-day Kindergarten and Universal Preschool, both worthy and important strategies, will be initiated with RTT-D funds or will wait for state funding in 2016-17. Also the Preventative Strategies appear to omit interventions and support for improvement of motivation, engagement, and social-emotional health, such as the plan to implement PBIS mentoring, and other interventions to address resilience and perseverance.

The timeline is somewhat vague (for instance, noting only 'intermediate' and 'long range' outcomes); there is also a lack of information as to who will be responsible for implementing the list of strategic activities listed in Table C. As a result, this section does not merit the full ten points due to the limitations of not adequately addressing all the components of a required RTT/D high quality plan.

[Note, a more specific timeline, deliverables, and key personnel responsible are provided for a related but different list in Table D in response (A)(4)]

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

In Table D, the applicant provides an Implementation Plan that is ambitious yet reasonable in its overall sequence of necessary activities, time-line, deliverables, and the key personnel responsible. This includes ensuring visible and accessible communication about the project's progress, regular internal and external evaluations, steps for improved educator effectiveness, in-depth instructional coaching and feedback, technology-rich learning environments, personalized learning goals/instruction/assessments, implementation of PBIS, and a broad array of new programs, supports, coursework, and mentoring at the high school level.

In table (A)(4)(a) the applicant provides a detailed and comprehensive set of data that describe its ambitious annual goals for students, overall and by grade level and subgroup. However, it is not clear to what extent these goals are actually achievable. For instance, in five years (SY 2012-2013 to SY 2017-18), the district's goal is to see 90% of its students, overall, performing at or above proficiency levels in Reading and Math; subgroups are expected to make equally impressive rates of improvement so that even the lowest performing subgroup, students with disabilities, will have 70% of its students at or above proficiency levels. These figures are mirrored in the (A)(4)(b) tables that outline the expected decrease in achievement gaps, and (A)(4)(c) and (d) tables that project increases in graduation and college enrollment rates. Perhaps the most ambitious goals describe English Learners and Students with Disabilities increasing their rate of college enrollment from 1 - 1.5% in SY 2012-13 to 44 & 45% in SY 2017-18; there is a lack of persuasive narrative that supports the 'achievability' of this projection.

Because of the concern for the achievability of a number of the applicant's goals and projected outcomes -- and thus lacking full credibility as required in RTT/D high quality plans -- this section earns a mid-range score of 7 points.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this section the applicant provides evidence that it has been a clear record of success in recent years of advancing student learning/ achievement and increasing equity in teaching and learning. However, this evidence is mostly available for only the past two years, justified by the note that before then there were multiple adjustments to the RIT scores required for proficiency in grades 3 through 8. However laudable this most recent uptick in markers of student growth and success, this response does not meet the RTT/D requirement of providing a clear record of success for the past four years.

In 2012, the Oregon State Department of Education identified three of the applicant's six elementary schools as "Model Schools," an acknowledgement of their accelerated rates of student growth and high achievement levels despite high rates of poverty in their students' families. Again in 2013, three of its elementary schools were designated as Level 5 Model Schools and one of the middle schools continued to be ranked as one of the top in the state. Overall, 4/9 schools were level 5, four schools ranked level 4 (with above average student growth and achievement) and the high school ranked level 3 in the top 50% of all Oregon high schools. The concern remains, however, that it is not clear what the actual data was for the district's schools that were not recognized and what the gap might be between/among those schools that were recognized and those that were not.

As noted in Table E, all 11th grade student subgroups experienced double-digit growth from 2008-09 to 2012-13, with particularly impressive changes in proficiency rates for Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged Students in Reading (+38.3%). Last year, as noted in Table F, the district's students were 3% to 5.8% above the state average in Reading, and an impressive 12.5% to 23% above the state average in Math. Table G shows that the applicant district's students, overall and by subgroup, considerably outperformed the state's students in their four-year cohort graduation rate; particularly noteworthy is the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup of students who outperformed the state average by 41.8%.

The district's post-secondary enrollment rate, as illustrated in Table H, continues to slowly but consistently increase, with more and more high school students earning college credits while still in high school. By earning dual credit, such students are twice as likely to enroll in college right after they graduate, particularly those students among traditionally underrepresented and underserved students. Dual high school/college credits earned has jumped from 3,050 in 2005-06 to 9,287 in

2012-13 when 59% of its students earned dual credit, with almost 72% of those earning nine or more college credits.

The district's administrative leadership team includes the 2012 Oregon Superintendent of the Year, the 2011 Oregon High School Assistant Principal of the Year, and the 2010 Oregon and National Middle School Principal of the Year. The district has also been recognized with numerous other state awards, including ones for administrative excellence in curriculum leadership, business/education partnerships, environmental initiatives, and STEM. The application includes compelling stories of individual students who have, with the support of district staff and programs, overcome huge challenges and increased their aspirations -- to eventually win full scholarships at in-state colleges and universities.

Regarding (B)(1)(b), the district does not have any persistently low-performing or lowest-achieving schools (as designated by the state); although Buel Elementary School has a significantly higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students (85.6%), its student growth and achievement levels are higher than state average. However, it is not clear why students in the higher poverty schools such as Buel are not targeted for additional RTT/D resources, or why the district's school intake boundaries are such that one school has such an exceptionally high rate of high needs students. That is, there is a lack of detail concerning what ambitious and significant reforms will be implemented in the district's highest need schools so that the achievement gaps would continue to close within the district as well as the gap diminishing between or among the various sub-groups within each elementary school.

The district's only high school has documented impressive overall changes in proficiency rates in both reading and math as measured by state assessment data (see Table E), with all 11th grade students increasing their proficiency rates in Reading from 66.6% in 2008-09 to 91.2% in 2012-13. This is difficult to understand since in 2012-13, only 23.3% of 11th grade English Learners were proficient in Reading. The dramatic increase [2008-09 to 2012-13] of +25.8% of 11th grade English Learners demonstrating proficiency in Math is perhaps less impressive when the data shows that only zero percent (0%) of these students were proficient in 2008-09.

The applicant describes admirable efforts to use student performance data to target instruction, customize interventions, provide enrichment, and to keep students and parents informed. Most parents utilize on-line access to helpful reports in their homes, but this is also provided through at-school technology; however, student data can also be accessed through regular mail, phone calls, and in person. Also Data teams analyze student performance data from state and local assessments to target interventions and supports for students at all grade levels who may be performing below proficiency levels. It is not clear how RTT/D funding would extend and enhance these efforts that are already in place.

Notoriously difficult to design school day schedules to accommodate additional instructional time for struggling students, the district's middle schools and high school have designed their schedules to provide double blocks (for instance in Algebra) or regular supplemental intervention time (e.g., 90 minutes every other day for 10th - 12th graders who are below proficiency in Reading) for struggling students. The extra 90 minute block features small group instruction, guided reading, and self-paced online courseware. Since at the high school double block Algebra in 9th grade and 90 minutes of supplemental reading instruction is already available as needed for 10th - 12th graders, it is not clear how RTT/D funds would achieve a further improvement in learning outcomes that would increase equity among sub-groups.

Although perhaps adequate and appropriate, there is a lack of information provided about the membership of the Data Teams and whether they are district or school-based, and a lack of specifics about the connection of data to various options for intervention and support (for instance, for struggling readers in the elementary schools). Although implied by the improvement in student performance, it is also not clear to what extent the making of student data available to parents and teachers has actually led to an improved rate and quality of family participation and support, or the use

of higher quality instructional strategies/ improved teacher effectiveness at all grade levels and in all schools.

Although the applicant documents recent success in advancing student learning/achievement, due to the above concerns in the applicant's response to (B)(1), this section is awarded 12 points.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a history of transparent communication of its budget and expenditures, earning an award for its Comprehensive Annual Financial reporting for the last four consecutive years. These include all personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures at the school and district levels. The Open Books Project and Open Education Source are two means for accessing such information as well as district staff making detailed budget presentations to school staffs, parents, service clubs, the business community, PTA leaders, and other stakeholders. Financial disclosure appears to be transparent, regular, and detailed.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's state of Oregon's laws and regulations provide and even encourage the autonomy necessary to fully implement strategies and structures to support personalized learning environments. These include rules and legislation that provide the flexibility for district to implement standards-based Credit by Proficiency, performance-based evaluation systems, and improved rates of college enrollment. Oregon's ESEA waiver from the US DOE has further expanded districts' flexibility and autonomy. In summary, the applicant's Winning the Future project will be implemented with fidelity within the state context of providing successful conditions and sufficient autonomy for districts to implement the strategies, programs, and professional development that will support more personalized learning environments.

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

15

12

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the development of this RTT/D proposal, a broad array of more than 50 [as evidenced in Table J] school, parent, and community individuals and groups collaborated on the project design and the development of the project's components, providing suggestions for the proposed high leverage structures, programs, and strategic supports. Half the members of the district's Design Team, initiated in 2010-2011, was chosen by district administrators and half by the teachers' union. The local union President participated in the development of the project and serves on the Design Team.

Although there is a lack of detailed information concerning the actual level of participation of external stakeholders in the development and revision of the RTT/D grant application, there are many letters of solid and enthusiastic support for on-going educational reform found in the Appendix. These include well-informed letters from the local Mayor; a nationally known provider of professional learning workshops; the Chair of the district's school board; the President of the area's Chamber of Commerce; STEM Coordinator for the state's University System; the President of a local college; the President of the local Education Foundation; a variety of business and community service program leaders; numerous PTA Presidents; and Hispanic/Latino community leaders.

It is impressive that high school students and recent graduates were surveyed and interviewed, and although the results are not described, the applicant contends that the students' feed-back and suggestions were incorporated in the project design; thus students' voice and choices helped improve engagement and the relevance of their learning.

In summary, this section is awarded 12 points (out of the fifteen available). There are strong letters of support from a diversity of stakeholders, as required by (B)(4)(b). However there is a lack of

information regarding how non-Design Team families, teachers, and principals were actually involved in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section outlines and briefly describes the numerous and varied core research-based project components of its plan for developing and sustaining K-12 personalized learning environments. The opportunities for intensive support offer parents and students (especially those considered high need/at risk) a range of options for achieving success as college and career ready high school graduates. It is not clear which of these components are already in place and which ones will be introduced or enhanced with RTT/D funding, or the extent to which sub-groups of students are benefitting from those already implemented.

The components include early intervention ("Ready for Kindergarten") for parents of birth to five year olds, followed by district-wide half day pre-Kindergarten for four year olds, and extended day Kindergarten for high needs students. Schools will also be implementing PBIS, balanced literacy and math programs, wraparound family educational services and technology access/assistance, common assessments, technology-rich teaching and learning, personalized learning goals, a more multicultural and culturally competent curriculum, dual language immersion, systematic monitoring of student progress towards state requirements for graduation that will be shared with students, STEM and STEAM intensive teaching and learning, proficiency/competency based credit, academic enrichment programs, dual high school/college credit and career pathway coursework, 9th grade smaller learning communities, ASPIRE college mentoring and College Seminar classes, college transition programs, performance based assessments, and career and life role education curriculum. While each of these initiatives are certainly worthwhile, ambitious, and research-based, it remains somewhat unclear as to how they will all be linked together in a plan that offers a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development.

The applicant offers useful description of each component and a rationale for why each one is crucial in its work to support parents, families, and students. There is less information provided about the extensive professional development that teachers and all other staff will need in order to effectively implement this broad constellation of approaches and initiatives.

There is a letter in the Appendix from Larry Ainsworth, the former Executive Director of Professional Development at the Leadership and Learning Center, describing his recent multi-year work with the applicant's K-12 staff to implement Rigorous Curriculum Design and Common Formative Assessments. A paid consultant, Ainsworth notes that the district has successfully implemented several interconnected professional practices for improving student achievement grounded in the district's commitment to offer sustained professional development related to standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the regular use of data. However, the district intends to add on a plethora of new initiatives, each of which will require extensive professional development in order to ensure fidelity in their implementation. The introduction of PBIS, proficiency-based credit, technology enriched teaching, 9th grade smaller learning communities (and many other initiatives) each require significant new skills, time, and commitments from the district's professional staff in order to provide the (b)(ii) high quality instructional approaches and environments. Without such an investment, the worthy goals for learning may be ambitious but not achievable.

It is also not clear what mechanisms will be in place so that students will understand how to use the new tools and resources that will be provided. Lastly, there is a lack of detail concerning which

components are presently in place, and which will be new RTT/D initiatives; there is also a lack of information regarding how many more students will be involved in the various options outlined in Tables K and L.

Although the overall constellation of components and their respective rationales appear likely to prepare far more students to graduate from high school ready to successfully enter college and/or careers, it is not clear that the applicant has met the criteria for a high quality plan (re: deliverables and overall credibility) required by RTT/D. For this reason, and because of the concerns outlined above, this section earns a mid-range score of 13.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section describes the applicant's plan for an InTASC and ISLLC-aligned teacher and administrator evaluation process and its plan for intensive and sustained professional development. Staff will be provided with workshops in Rigorous Curriculum Design and Power Strategies for Effective Teaching (in the areas of activating learning, engaging the learner, and strengthening literacy, each of which includes multiple focus areas) -- along with workshops in Guided Language Acquisition Design, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, Constructing Meaning, Collaborative Problem Solving, and Technology-Rich Teaching and Learning. This appears to be a very ambitious list of topics, and there are other proposed district-wide programs such as PBIS that will also entail considerable professional development time.

The applicant intends to provide first and second year teachers with 90 hours of mentoring (it is not clear who will serve as the mentors or their level of training as a mentor/coach) and embedded staff development in PLCs/ Professional Learning Communities that will focus on a specific Power Strategy over numerous sessions. Also master teachers will serve as highly trained instructional coaches, providing about twenty-six hours of support for each teacher.

While this section outlines numerous solid and worthwhile initiatives to support the individual and collective capacity of teachers, administrators, and specialists to address (a)(i - iv), it seems doubtful that the district's educators will have sufficient time and energy for the extensive training and supervised practice required to successfully implement the new programs and approaches involved in personalizing teaching and learning for all students. It is also not clear how administrators, who will be heavily involved in the implementation of a new Teacher and Administrator Evaluation process (see Table M) will have the time to provide the leadership and supervision to ensure the quality professional development/learning required for successful implementation of such a plethora of other initiatives that are either recent adoptions or will be brand new for many teachers.

In summary, while the applicant describes an impressive list of present and proposed initiatives to strengthen teaching effectiveness, the applicant does not provide a clear, credible and workable high quality plan to actually provide the necessary intensive training [required in (C)(2)(c)(ii)] and sustained professional development hours to implement its goals for improving the effectiveness of teaching, learning and leading that will accelerate personalized learning to prepare significantly more students for college/careers. Such training is required by (C)(2)(c) along with the appropriate tools and resources. It is also not clear how the school leaders and leadership teams will have the essential time, training, policies, and resources to supervise and nurture teachers as they work to expand their skills for increasing student performance among the highest needs students and thus come closer to closing achievement gaps among sub-groups.

Although there are many promising components described, it remains unclear as to whether the new RTT/D initiatives will as a whole build sufficient educator capacity to implement the standards, measure student progress, and so forth.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides an overview of the district's and schools' governance structures that will support project implementation. For instance, each of the nine schools already has operational Building Leadership Teams; the BLT at the high school has a recent history of success with implementing various school reform measures. All such teams appear to have sufficient flexibility and autonomy to make decisions regarding factors such as school schedules and calendars, personnel decisions and staffing models, and school-level budgets. However, there is a lack of detail concerning the the separate and/or overlapping roles and responsibilities of the nine schools' building leadership teams and site councils. Also, it appears unlikely that the hiring of one additional staff person (Project Director) at the central office will provide sufficient resources to manage and oversee an RTT/D grant budget with its numerous projects and initiatives designed to facilitate personalized learning.</p> <p>The district's Credit by Proficiency/ competency-based teaching and learning initiative, laudable in itself, will be implemented as a core component of the RTT/D plan, emphasizing a variety of ways for students to earn credit for standards-based learning. Students in their technology-rich learning environments will be able to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, utilizing problem/project based and collaborative learning options. However, there is a lack of detail regarding how many of these opportunities are presently in place and how many will be new -- and how the common formative assessments, the results of which will drive customized interventions, will actually be developed, and by whom (this is a challenging and time-consuming project in itself).</p> <p>The implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) frameworks along with Power Strategies for Effective Teaching and technology-rich strategies together provide ways for providing all students, including those with disabilities and English learners, the instructional practices necessary for successful personalization within inclusive classrooms. However, there is a lack of information about how many teachers in each school are already proficient in UDL and Power Strategies, and how others (particularly new teachers) will be provided with the necessary training/ coaching, support, and supervision to implement these approaches with fidelity.</p> <p>Novice English language learners are supported by highly qualified teachers certified in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and Guided Language Acquisition Design; there is a lack of specifics regarding how these strategies will be utilized by regular classroom teachers. English Learners are also served in dual language immersion programs at two of the six district elementary schools, raising concerns about the services offered to similar students at the other four elementary schools.</p> <p>In summary, the applicant provides a hefty list of governance structures, instructional practices and competency-based credit pathways, any one of which may facilitate personalized learning. However it remains unclear if there is a credible over-arching high quality plan regarding responsible parties (for instance, who will develop and supervise the opportunities for the multiple ways of earning competency-based credits). There is also a lack of information about the timeline and hours involved in providing the professional development for implementing the described learning resources and instructional practices needed to facilitate the personalization of learning environments. Together these concerns negatively impact the overall credibility of the applicant's efforts to present a high quality plan, thus earning a mid-level score of 8.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant will provide appropriate technical support for all project components, including coursework, database access, and intervention as well as enrichment programs. Parents and students can export appropriate student performance information from the district's eschool database; those without home internet access can use unspecified school-provided technology. There are also options for those preferring to access the information in Spanish and/or sent home in print. All schools in the applicant district use the eschool/Cognos/Mastery in Motion integrated and interoperable data systems.

There is a lack of specifics regarding the staffing, facility availability, and particulars of the nine schools' Family Resource Centers that will provide technical assistance to families interested in accessing student data and teacher grade books for their child/ren. In addition, there is a need for more specific and persuasive information about the timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible [required for an effective and credible RTT/D high quality plan] for moving to what is presently available to students, teachers, administrators, and families for technology systems and appropriate levels of technical support, and what new or upgraded elements will be implemented with RTT/D funding.

For those reasons, this section is awarded a mid-level score of 7.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a solid and workable plan for a rigorous and continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals. These are promised to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-framed. The external evaluation team is key to this process, utilizing on-site observations of project services and strategies and student performance data to generate interim reports with specific recommendations to support any necessary project improvement on an on-going basis. The evaluation team will share their findings with the Project Advisory Council, at school staff meetings, in community forums, and on the district/project website.

However there is a lack of information about what specific observation instrument will be utilized to assess teacher, mentor, and student behaviors as well as what tools will be used to assess the quality of observed lessons/activities. It is not clear what the level of training and skill will be required for those conducting the observations (or how such knowledge and skills will be developed and by whom). It is also not clear how feed-back from the evaluation will actually be utilized for any needed adjustments/ revisions during the term of the RTT/D funding, e.g., this is implied but not specified.

Thus this section earns a score at the low end of the high level scores: 13 points.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a reasonable and well developed plan for on-going communication with internal and external stakeholders, including dissemination through websites, social media, newspaper articles, and presentations to school, business, community, and state educational organizations. Presentations will also be given to meetings of the School Board, Project Advisory Council, Building Leadership Teams, site Councils, and the Administrative Cabinet. Engagement will be augmented by high school students who will generate regularly up-dated videos about the project that will be shown widely. Thus the applicant has a clear plan for ongoing communication with many internal and external stakeholders, although there is a lack of detail about how non-English speaking parents and students

will be involved in this communication and engagement plan; Table A in section (A)(1) notes that in each school between 17.7% and 53.7% of students are Hispanic.

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

The applicant provides a plethora of sensible performance measures for providing rigorous, timely, and formative data to monitor the extent of on-going improvements in teacher effectiveness and, most importantly, student growth and progress. There is a concern, however, that teacher and administrator surveys and randomized interviews may not provide sufficient and reliable information about the effectiveness of teachers, administrators, and the cost/benefit of professional development and instructional coaching [see Table P].

The charts for (E)(3) provide target goals in reading and math for all Pre K - 3rd grade students and the designated subgroups of Hispanic students, English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and students from Economically Disadvantaged families. Grade 4th through 8th grade students are projected to increase by only a very modest one percent from SY 2013-14 to SY 2017-18 re: the percentage of student who are on track to college and career readiness (89% to 90% in four years, per chart (E)(3)a).

Students in 12th grade appear to be struggling to earn 9+ dual high school and college credits, with only 3.4% of English Learners doing so in 2012-13 (projected to be 36% in SY 2017-18); 31.8% of all students are doing so presently, with still only 50% expected to do so in SY 2017-18. It is also concerning that the postsecondary enrollment rate for English Learners and Students with Disabilities is presently extremely low (1 - 1.5%) although this is projected to increase to 44 - 45% by SY 2017-18, a considerable jump that raises serious questions as to the achievability of such ambitious goals. There is a lack of consistency regarding the expected progress among all students and various subgroups. For instance, the percentage of 11th graders scoring proficient on the state reading assessment stays at 90% for all students (from 2012-13 to 2017-18), but the percentage of English Learner scoring at the proficient level in Reading in the same five year period is expected to jump from 23.3% to 70%.

There is a lack of information provided about how the impact of the multi-tiered school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) programs will be monitored -- for instance, through fewer students needing intensive interventions/support -- nor is there mention of potential utilization of a SWISS/PBIS data system. Previously mentioned as the key social-emotional/behavioral improvement program to be implemented in all the district's schools, the omission of PBIS monitoring in this section is inadequate in meeting this section's requirement for proposing health or social-emotional leading indicators at each grade span.

In summary, this section warrants only a mid-level score as its lists of performance measures are incomplete and do not consistently include how these will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed overall plan and theory of action -- or how it will review and improve each measure over time if it is insufficient to track implementation progress. These aspects are essential if the goals are to be achievable.

As a result of such concerns, this section earns a mid-level score of 3.

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

The applicant describes a Return on Investment approach in its project design that will leverage local/general funds, build on current district initiatives, and provide for an external evaluation of the impact of RTT/D projects as outlined in section (E)(1). The applicant acknowledges that some of the project's impact may not be immediately known, but contends that investments in birth to five education, professional development, and technology -- and the involvement of community partners --

bode well for the implementation and sustainability of the project's new structures and strategies.

The applicant states that during project implementation traditional service delivery approaches must be maintained but then will be dismantled as RTT/D project components are found to be more effective. This makes sense, although there is no detail regarding what presently constitutes 'traditional service delivery approaches' in the applicant's district and how this transition will take place successfully for students, teachers, and families.

Further, the applicant does not directly address the evaluation plan for making any necessary and appropriate adjustments and revisions during implementation of the proposed professional development and new teaching and learning activities that employ technology, including the switch from traditional books/textbooks to an all digital platform of ebooks and on-line resources.

For these reasons, this section earns a low mid-range score of 2.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>[The applicant's budget for (F)(1) is actually located at the end of the application].</p> <p>In general, there is reasonable and sufficient funding projected to support the development and implementation of the applicant's Winning the Future project. 25% of the project budget will be devoted to investments in birth to five early childhood initiatives; 27% in educational technology and digital content; 12% in professional development; remaining dollars will be invested in programs supporting extended learning, career and college readiness, family resource centers, instructional coaching, and project management. Requested RTT/D funds will be augmented with district funds, community partnership grants and funds, and Title I funds. One-time and short-term investments to build school and district capacity and long-term sustainability represent one-third of all RTT/D funds. The total budget for all the project components is \$40,863,311. Of this amount, \$19,999,502. is requested in RTT/D grant funding and \$20,863,809. is projected as coming from other sources.</p> <p>A few budget lines need further clarification and justification. For instance, it is not clear how the \$1,000,000. budgeted for performance bonuses (based on student growth) will actually be distributed in Year 3 and 4 of the grant funding; more information is needed regarding who will be eligible for such bonuses and the criteria and process for deciding how these dollars will be distributed. There is also more information needed regarding the significant investment of \$4,635,000. in technology and how that will actually reap its intended benefits for at risk/high needs students. Lastly, it is not clear if the over \$2 million in non-RTT/D external foundation grants are already guaranteed for the next five years, and if not realized, how this part of the project's budget will be supported.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant notes that 51% of project costs will be funded by non-RTT/D funds, with specific funding sources and amounts given for each of the upcoming four years. Table R outlines the applicant's sustainability plan that appears reasonable given the unknowables of post-grant local and state funding five years hence. The plan rests on the yet untested assumption that the state's economy will continue to improve and thus the tax revenues for education will continue to increase. It is also assumed that the local and state decision-makers will provide the necessary funds for a variety of proposed educational initiatives.

There is a need for further information regarding how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform post-grant budgeting. Although the amount and sources for post-grant funding may not be clear, the applicant can and should be more forthcoming about how it will evaluate the impact of the project's components and its overall outcomes in terms of more personalized learning that will lead to all students graduating from high school college and career ready.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This section of the application reviews the many partnerships which are already in place between the district and a variety of organizations, businesses, and colleges/universities; some are potential funders (e.g., Target Foundation) or sites for internships. The applicant lists a plethora of partnerships, noting their present or expected services and contributions. While each partnership has the potential for positively impacting student success, it is difficult to discern a coherent plan for how these various partnerships will work together to integrate their services so that they complement one another and augment the services provided by the district's schools. This is particularly important when tracking resources and services (and their improved results over time) that are targeted to support students facing significant challenges as listed in requirement (3)(b).

There is a lack of evidence of a plan to scale up the quality, reach, or the number of high needs students who will actually benefit from any of these partnerships. It is not clear how the partnership arrangements would actually provide new or enhanced integrated tools, services, and supports to the district's staff and/or students. The performance measures noted in table (6) note ambitious goals that often appear to be questionable in their achievability. For instance, it is projected that the percentage of students with disabilities will improve in the 15 domains of the Child Behavior Rating Scale from 20% in SY 2012-13 to 60% in SY 2017-18. Likewise, it is expected that the percentage of Hispanic students performing at or above proficiency on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will improve from 38% in 2012-13 to 75% in 2017-18. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students performing at or above proficiency on the 3rd grade state reading assessment is expected to improve from 62.6% in 2012-2013 to 90% in 2017-18. That is, some of the annual goals listed in the performance measures table are ambitious but are not compelling in their ability to be fully realized for sub-groups of students. When appearing overly optimistic, the five year expected outcomes appear unlikely to be achieved.

There is additional information needed regarding how the applicant's partnerships will actually augment and strengthen the skills and tools of the teachers and staff in the participating schools, and what the decision-making process and infrastructure of these partnerships will actually "look like." It is also not clear how the partnerships will extend, and complement the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to address the social, emotional or behavioral needs of all students, nor is it clear how they will help with the acculturation of students whose families are recent immigrants and/or refugees or are at high risk for a multitude of other reasons.

Thus this competitive preference priority proposal of partnerships with the applicant district earns a mid level score of 5.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although often lacking in needed details, the applicant has met Absolute Priority 1 for its commitment to create more personalized learning environments designed to significantly improve teaching and learning that will contribute to more students graduating college and career-ready.</p>		

Total	210	157
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