



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0230TN-1 for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the four core educational assurance areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform educators with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around chronically low-achieving schools.

Appendix A.1.a illustrated a summary of MNPS reform initiatives from 2009-14 showing 5 goals (collaborative culture, standards and assessments, teachers and leaders, data systems, and turnaround and the strategies associated for each. For example, Goal 3: Create a self-renewing organization of great teachers and leaders; the strategies include instructional leadership (principal and teacher leadership institutes, development of school based leadership teams) and accountability for results (TEAM teacher evaluation system).

The applicant noted that new standards and aligned assessments are essential in providing the academic rigor necessary for students to be prepared for college and career, and we have committed to making the standards even stronger through adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Appendix A.1.b (Common Core State Standards Implementation Plan) provides supporting evidence for this claim.

The applicant also referenced Appendix A.1.c to show how the district has implemented Common Core through school based coaches. Appendix A.1.d (Partnership of Assessment for Readiness in College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium) shows the districts involvement with the development of a common set of computer based assessments in ELA and Math linked to the CCSS.

The Data Warehouse provides a dashboard-style data system for educators, parents, and students to access real-time aggregated and disaggregated student information. Appendix A.1.e provides supporting details to strengthen the claims. The Virtual Data Wall explanation provides TVAAS data such as projection probability labels which are based on students' probability of scoring basic, proficient, and advanced.

The applicant described Tennessee's assessment system (referenced Appendix A.1.e), and the newly created Teacher Evaluation System that allows educators to: use student growth as one of multiple performance measures; expand the use of data to close the teacher equity gap between high-poverty/high-minority schools and low-poverty/low-minority schools; partner with our public, state, and private higher education institutions to meet our recruitment challenges; and link professional development to teacher effectiveness based on student performance measures (referenced Appendix A.1.f). Appendix A1f provides an overview of Tennessee educator acceleration model (TEAM) and a summary of the teacher evaluation system.

The applicant also mentioned the Office of Innovation that focuses on the needs of the lowest-achieving schools in MNPS, an approach that has subsequently been replicated throughout the State of Tennessee. Innovation Zone (iZone) schools are provided autonomy for decision-making in exchange for rigorous accountability (referenced Appendix A.1.g).

The applicant mentioned that it will focus new resources, and leverage existing resources, to transform middle school structures, staffing models, compensation systems and classroom practices to create personalized learning environments for all middle school students and educators through three primary and fundamental components of teaching and learning: 1) personalized supports; 2) personalized approaches to learning; and 3) personalized relationships (referenced Appendix A.1.i.i).

Overall, the applicant provided substantial and justifiable evidence that articulate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The applicant addressed each element with sufficient details; therefore, a score of 10 is given.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant noted that MNPS middle schools face continued systemic challenges around student achievement growth, gap closure, and attrition numbers (referenced Appendix A.2.b: The Educator Background Report). Outcomes of student and educator performance have been inconsistent in our middle schools, with some schools achieving, and others struggling to meet academic targets.</p> <p>MNPS’ approach to implementing personalized learning environments in all middle schools is a strategic process of continuous improvement and development, with a phased approach over the course of the four-year grant period, as illustrated in Appendix A.2.a. The applicant will leverage six existing school structures primed for transformation to serve as Platform schools, who will incubate innovative strategies for personalized learning, and then scale implementation to 24-28 Strategy Cluster Schools through the establishment of networks of schools, working together to achieve common goals for personalized learning.</p> <p>The applicant notes that Platform school selection will be determined by the District Design and Implementation Team (DDIT) (see Section A(3)), and will be based on the school’s voluntary entry, proven leadership, and capacity to implement the core components of personalized learning (referenced Appendix A.2.c). Appendix A.2.c illustrates the Platform selection criteria. Platform schools will be intentionally chosen to represent a mix of traditional, magnet and charter schools, and multiple geographic clusters.</p> <p>All Platform schools will spend a minimum of six to nine months in a planning and development phase focused on three primary priorities: 1) completing a comprehensive school-based needs-assessment to determine a strategic school improvement plan for implementing personalized learning environments; 2) preparing all stakeholders, including students, families and community for the implementation of personalized learning environments; and 3) building the capacity of all educators to implement personalized learning environments. Additional information as to how this will take place is needed to further justify the claims.</p> <p>Platform schools will build on existing practices around data-driven decision-making and targeted supports for high-needs students and families; build on their initial success in motivating students and accelerating student achievement by implementing or enhancing innovative approaches to teaching and learning; build on their expertise in promoting positive school cultures through the establishment of personalized relationship structures that support strong and meaningful connections among students, between students and adults, and among educators.</p> <p>The applicant provided a list of the schools (middle) that will participate in the grant activities. The evidence provided demographical information as well as the total number of participating educators (1470) and total number of participating students (22,959). Supporting details provided the number of participating students from low income families and students who were categorized as high need.</p> <p>The applicant addressed each element and provided some evidence of its implementation. The description of the process of selecting middle schools was noted but clarity is needed as it relates to the number of schools that will participate; this number will definitely impact the budget and budget band (# of schools/students at the start of the grant is what the budget should be based). Based on the evidence provided, a score of 8 is provided.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
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<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To develop and provide support for the implementation of personalized learning environments, as well as to build the organizational capacity to support the scale up of these initiatives district-wide, the applicant will form a District Design and Implementation Team (DDIT), who will collectively be responsible for the fidelity with which this proposal is successfully executed, based on the implementation timeline (Referenced Appendix A.2.a-Implementation Plan).</p> <p>The DDIT will be facilitated by the MNPS Project Director (Appendix A.3.a) who will act as a liaison between the DDIT and the district’s Executive Staff and Board of Education to enable rapid response to implementation challenges, inform district leadership of progress, and request any necessary policy and budgetary supports. Appendix A.3.a displays the project director job description.</p> <p>As it relates to scaling up, the applicant mentioned that the DDIT’s efforts will be augmented through a unique, collaborative opportunity presented by the National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools (NCSU). The NCSU will assist in the facilitation of our continuous improvement cycle by working collaboratively with the DDIT, and by serving as our thought partner in adapting the innovative strategies for cluster schools and eventually, all middle schools. Five collective lessons have been determined as a framework for implementation at scale: (1) deep knowledge and understanding of the design challenge, (2) ownership and commitment in process for change, (3) innovative solutions to challenges, (4) adaptation of innovation to context, and (5) supportive infrastructures. The applicant referenced Appendix A.3.b but this document is missing.</p>		
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The applicant noted that its theory of change and strategic plan is based on a solid vision for reform, which is built upon: 1) A track-record of success as demonstrated through improved student outcomes (see Section (B)(1)); 2) Successful current initiatives addressing the four core educational assurance areas that provide a solid foundation for continued reform; 3) A bold change strategy that fundamentally redesigns K-12 school structures and empowers all students to lead their own learning; 4) A comprehensive approach to personalized learning that incorporates research-based and innovative strategies for the essential components of teaching and learning, including: data customization and interventions (personalized supports); innovative instructional and staffing practices (personalized approaches to learning); and learners' sense of self-efficacy, confidence, and sense of belonging (personalized relationships); 5) Research-based criteria for readiness to select our participating schools; 6) A staged implementation model that incorporates a continuous improvement approach to spread and scale effective reforms; and 7) The implementation of district-wide reforms, such as strategic compensation and school autonomy with accountability, which will better ensure that our schools have the resources and flexibility to meet their students' needs through effective personalized learning environments.

The applicant addresses each component but supporting details are lacking. The evidence provided does not clearly demonstrate qualities of a high quality plan as defined in the notice. Supporting evidence that further describes how the project will be scaled up and who will be responsible for the proposed activities would have strengthened the claims provided. In addition, the applicant identifies the foundation on which the vision was established but supporting details are needed to clearly illustrate how this theory of change will improve student learning outcomes. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 5 is given.

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

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8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified the summative assessments being used: The TCAP Achievement Test and its modifications – English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA) and Modified Academic Achievement Standards (MAAS) assessment (grades 3-8); Algebra I End of Course (EOC) exams; and TCAP-Alt Portfolio (grades 3-12). The TCAP is administered to mostly 3rd-8th graders while the ELSA is designed for Limited English Proficient students and the MAAS for special education students functioning below grade level. The Algebra I EOC exam is administered to qualifying middle school students and is used in place of the Math portion of the Achievement test. The TCAP-Alt Portfolio assessment is administered to special education students in grades 5-8 with significant cognitive deficits for whom a standardized test is not a valid measure.

The applicant identified the goal as it relates to improved student outcomes. The applicant plans to reduce the percent of students scoring below proficient by 50% over 5 years, versus 8 years used for state-level accountability purposes. In addition to setting proficiency AMOs that would significantly raise the percent of students meeting rigorous standards each year, the applicant notes that annual growth targets will be established for the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS). The applicant provides ambitious yet achievable goals for math, reading language arts, and science for the overall subgroup as well as individual subgroups.

As it relates to decreasing the achievement gaps, the applicant identified the goal areas (math, reading language arts, and science), subgroups, and comparison group. The applicant noted that the gaps are calculated for the following groups as is the convention in Tennessee: Black/Hispanic/Native American versus All Students, Economically Disadvantaged (ED) versus non-ED, Students with Disabilities (SWD) versus non-SWD, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) versus non-LEP. The table showed reasonable and achievable goals for each year.

The applicant affirmed that MNPS is committed to narrowing the achievement gap as measured by graduation rate. The methodology sets more ambitious improvement targets for students in subgroups that have typically underperformed the district. By cutting the percentage of non-graduates in half for each subgroup, MNPS will also close the graduation rate achievement gap by 50% over five years. The table provided supporting details.

The applicant explained how college enrollment numbers were calculated and how it is defined. The district's goal is for a 2.6% college enrollment improvement each year; cutting the rate of students in each subgroup who do not enroll in college in half in eight years. Considering that each subgroup has its own goal set, the college-going gap decreases as the rate of students enrolling in college increases. The table illustrated the subgroup with baseline data for 2012-13. The goals appear to be ambitious yet achievable.

Overall, the applicant addressed each of the components with evidence but supporting details are needed as it relates to tying the vision to the goals. The connection needs to be more evident. In addition, there is some concern as to how the data were lumped. Lumping scores could be somewhat problematic in that it has the ability to hide strengths and weaknesses. A rationale to this approach would have strengthened the applicant's reasoning. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 8 is given.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant showed some signs of success from the past four years. Based on Tennessee State Accountability system, MNPS status as a district is currently in its 3rd year of steady improvement. A table was provided that showed a historical status (good standing, target, school improvement I, school improvement II, corrective action, restructuring) of the district for 2007-2013. MNPS was the only district in the greater Nashville Metropolitan area of 14 counties to reach Intermediate Status in 2012-13 and the only urban district to meet the requirements for Intermediate status in 2013-14. It was the only urban school system in the state to reach Intermediate status for both years of the new system.

Student achievement in MNPS elementary and middle schools has steadily improved over the last four years as demonstrated on state assessments. The figure was presented to show achievement test results for grades 3 through 8 for the last 4 years. The data revealed steady and significant progress in reading/language, math and science with math results showing the highest improvement (2010-2013) on the MNPS TCAP assessment.

The applicant provides another figure that showed steady progress in all four areas since 2010, with a dramatic increase in percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in Math, Grade 7 since 2010.

MNPS has also demonstrated progress in improving subgroup achievement. Disaggregated results showed that all subgroups have made steady progress in both Reading and Math in grades 3-8 since the state of Tennessee adopted new curriculum and performance standards in 2009-2010. The table showed positive gains in the number of percentage points on the TCAP Reading/Language Arts assessment for all subgroups. The table justified the applicant's claims.

As it relates to graduation rates, the applicant noted that the graduation rates for the past five years are not completed but since 2006, there has been a 3.2% increase across all students. Particularly, on-time graduation rates among Hispanic students have increased by 10 percentage points since 2006. A table was provided to support the claims.

Based on the data available, the percent of students enrolling in college has also been relatively flat over the most recent four years.

The applicant noted that MNPS has successfully implemented several initiatives to reform schools in recent years, especially the low-performing schools. In 2010, twenty High Priority MNPS middle and high schools became part of the first 3 year School Improvement Grant (SIG I) cohort. In 2009 they were identified as the lowest performing but in 2011, 85% had demonstrated significant improvements in student performance. The applicant provided additional evidence of reforms in low achieving schools (Margaret Allen Middle School and Antioch High School).

The applicant addressed two of the three elements. Although success within the past four years was not evident as it relates to graduation rates and college enrollment, a rationale was provided. Evidence that show availability of student performance data is missing. Based on the evidence that was provided, a score of 10 is given.

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

The applicant discusses the two high yield strategies in its process of reforming the district's core business model. The first is a budget autonomy pilot where principals and school leadership teams will be provided exceptional levels of control, autonomy, and flexibility over resources – people, time, technology, and money. The second core business model reform is a transition from a tradition FTE-based resource allocation process to a weighted student funding method where funding "follows the student" and students are funded according to their unique needs. Supporting details are provided to justify the applicant's claims.

The applicant notes that piloting this business model addresses the need for greater transparency about how resources are allocated and utilized at the district-school level.

As it relates to making available the four categories of school level expenditures, the applicant noted that school-level expenditures are reported on the government website. The information includes actual, aggregated expenditures on a school-by-school basis categorized by Salary & Wages, Fringe Benefits, and Other Operating expenses.

Each year, MNPS produces a Budget Book that contains a user-friendly presentation of the past year's expenditures and budgeted expenditures for the upcoming year. The Budget Book contains new sections that provide school-level expenditures for actual personnel salaries in total and by functional category as classified in the U.S. Census Bureau's F-33 survey.

The applicant also notes that principals actively participating in the budget autonomy rollout are encouraged to include parents and other district stakeholders in their annual budgeting process. Participating parents and other stakeholders will not only have access to information about school-level resources, but will participate in the process of determining how best to utilize them.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant showed some level of transparency in the LEA processes, practices, and investments. Although the applicant provided links to access the evidence, copies of the documents in the Appendix or examples of each expenditure would have strengthened the claims. It was unclear if non personnel expenditures at the school level are included. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 3 is provided.

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

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8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided substantial evidence about Tennessee and its context for implementation. Such evidence included Tennessee adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). MNPS was the first district trained in the implementation of the CCSS for grades K-2 in both English Language Arts and Math.

The applicant referenced the 2012 report from Achieve (Appendix B.3.c) that noted Tennessee as a leader in its efforts to support standards implementation in three ways: providing processes, protocols, and exemplars; approving a list of materials aligned with CCSS; and developing materials that districts can voluntarily use.

In addition, the "Tennessee Miracle" was referenced (Appendix B.3.d) for the note-worthy increase, over two years, in the rigor of standards. The alignment of local and state government focusing on education propelled the state of Tennessee to second place on the State Proficiency Standards of 2011. Tennessee was one of three states to receive an 'A' for rigorous state standards, with half of states' scores decreasing.

The applicant also noted that Tennessee is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and will implement new, CCSS-aligned assessments in the 2013-2014 school year. Additional evidence of successful conditions of the state included its state evaluation of teacher education programs that includes the success of each program's graduates in improving student achievement as measured by value added scores and the launch of two projects to improve teacher and principal training programs: Integrating Common Core into Pre-Service Training and Integrating the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System into Pre-Service Training (Appendix B.3.f).

As it relates specifically to autonomy, Tennessee has received approval from the U.S. Department of Education to implement an alternate accountability system through a waiver of the No Child Left Behind Act (Appendix B.3.i). Tennessee has great flexibility under its First to the Top legislation to assist districts with a variety of strategies to turn around their low-performing schools.

The applicant also noted that Tennessee has specific legislation and accompanying State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.03 (see Appendix B.3.j), which allows approval of virtual schools. MNPS has established its own virtual school, which has been approved by the State.

The applicant provided some evidence of successful conditions and autonomy under state legal and regulatory requirements but additional evidence demonstrating autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments is minimal. Additional details would have strengthened the applicant's claims. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 8 is provided.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MNPS solicited input from stakeholders that directly or tangentially impacts the personalized learning environment of our students. They contributed at every stage of developing the application. Their influence is evident in the philosophy of change, theory of action, and plan of implementation.

The applicant reported that students; teachers; principals; central office staff; school board members; parents; early learning groups; the Tennessee Department of Education; the Tennessee Higher Education Commission; philanthropic organizations; private vendors; special population advocates; political partners at local, state, and federal levels; media groups; institutions of higher education; the local and regional business community; professional organizations; charter schools; other large urban school districts; and national advocacy groups were involved in the development process.

Student focus groups were conducted with a particular interest in diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds and all special populations (See Appendix B.4.a). The student voice provided input about ways they learned the best, including being engaged by technology, the design of the classroom, the approach teachers take with their peers, and what will prepare

them best for college and careers. Evidence of how the proposal was revised or framed based on their feedback/engagement was provided.

MNPS sought input from teachers through two separate focus groups. The first group came from teachers participating in the Teacher Leadership Institute (See Appendix B.4.b). The second group was organized in partnership with the Metro Nashville Education Association (MNEA), and gave very valuable feedback about effective professional development practices (Appendix B.4.c).

The applicant noted that parent focus group gave very concrete suggestions to engage their children and to facilitate ongoing communication throughout the implementation process (See Appendix B.4.d).

In addition, principals were heavily involved in the grant writing process (Appendix B.4.e). As the school leaders, principals outlined the autonomy they need to more effectively educate their students. The grant writing team incorporated ideas from all areas of the district support infrastructure. Representatives from fiscal, human resources, professional development, building planners, school planners, customer service, purchasing, and information technology were on the team.

Letters of support (92) from key stakeholders were provided. Letters included: College Board, Vanderbilt University, the United Way, Teen make a Change, Martha O'Bryan Center, and Ford Next Generation Learning.

The applicant provided sufficient and justified evidence demonstrating stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. The Appendices provided supporting evidence and further justified the applicant's claims. Based on the evidence provided it is not clear if the LEA participates in collective bargaining or not. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 13 is provided.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

To address exposure to diversity element, the applicant commented that the Platform and Strategy Cluster schools may perhaps develop PBL projects informed by student diversity and interests by inviting multi-cultural families to participate in PBL projects, integrate students' home languages and cultural contexts into content and instruction via lessons, literature, projects and experiential activities, or engage community partners focused on working with and/or serving diverse populations.

In terms of mastery of content, the applicant will provide personalized supports to monitor progress toward goals through standards-based formative assessments in math, science, social studies and English language arts in grades K-12. In addition, Platform and Strategy Cluster schools will implement ILPs through data walls, students' self-evaluations, student-led conferences, and utilizing online portals for every middle school student. More details are needed to strengthen these claims. Who will be responsible for leading these conferences, how many times would these conferences take place are a few questions that need to be clarified.

Access to high-quality content will be made available through a catalog of quality, open source, free resources recommended for MNPS parents and students will be created and made publically available online. The LEA Anytime Access for All initiative will help ensure access to these valuable resources during out-of-school time, through a strategy that helps ensure each student has a technology device and internet access from their home (Section (D)(2)).

As it relates to ongoing and regular feedback, the applicant referenced the data warehouse. MNPS has leveraged this personalized support technology and a local development team to create a variety of analytic reports and dashboards designed to meet the needs of various stakeholders from the district level to the classroom (see Appendix C.1.a).

MNPS' instructional management system will leverage an existing early warning system that personalizes supports for students by indicating student's track to graduation. The applicant stated that the LEA would link the early warning system to the instructional management system, allowing early warning triggers to link to specific interventions and strategies.

In regards to the mechanism to provide training and support to students, the applicant mentioned the use of student ambassadors in middle schools who would train their fellow students around the following: student dashboards, peer-to-peer mentoring, student self-evaluations, student portfolios, and blended learning. Peer to peer mentoring was also noted as a possible mechanism.

The applicant addressed each element and provided some evidence as it relates to preparing students for college and learning. Supporting details (Appendices) provided support to some the applicant's claims but more evidence is needed to demonstrate a cohesive plan. For example additional information about the student ambassadors (how many, what grade levels) would have strengthen the applicant's assertions. This type of information has implications on the overall budget. Also, more description about

blended learning and how it looks across all grades would have added support to the response. The applicant was general as it relates to understanding what students are learning (Element a.i). Based on the evidence, the applicant does not demonstrate a high quality plan; therefore, a score of 13 was provided.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant noted that the LEA's approach to professional learning is based on networked learning communities sharing best practices and collaborating around problems of practice. The implementation plan and timeline will serve as a catalyst for strengthening the networking among and between Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools (Section (A)(2)).

The Platform School principals, with support from the DDIT, will identify a leadership team made up of teacher leaders and other administrators across the Strategy Cluster that will then be responsible for establishing an action plan for rolling out a community of practice (COP) across the Strategy Cluster. It is unclear who the administrators are (only principals, assistant principals, and curriculum specialists). Instructional coaches and other district leaders appointed by the DDIT will work collaboratively with all Platform and Strategy Cluster schools to determine strengths, needs and areas for targeted professional learning. The applicant does not provide a rationale for these individuals to work with all the Platform and Clusters schools.

Professional learning for educators in Platform and Strategy Cluster schools will focus on identifying the academic needs of students and constructing and adapting diverse instructional methods to meet those needs. One of our core strategies is project-based learning in a blended environment. Details describing what the blended environment and how it looks in lower middle vs. upper middle are needed to support the claims.

The applicant expressed that through the data coaches and by increasing educator capacity, will promote a common language around data and assessment that will disseminate information and professional learning resources. How these data coaches would interact across schools was not explain.

ILPs will be developed for educators. The plans will include review of educator's ratings on each indicator of the evaluation rubric and his/her summative rating; written feedback from observations; goals for continuous improvement; specific strategies and action steps to accomplish goals; educator-completed needs assessment on using data to inform instruction; and feedback around the educator's ability to implement the reforms. The applicant identified the DDIT and instructional coaches as the individuals responsible for developing a rubric and training schools on how to develop and grow through their ILPs.

To ensure educators know how to identify and use personalized supports for students, extensive training on interpreting and using student dashboards will be provided. Educators will be trained in the TASEL and ILP Platform and Strategy Cluster schools to use student dashboards and work with students so they can effectively monitor their own performance and progress toward goals. Instructional coaches will provide the trainings during regularly scheduled PLC and COP sessions. The applicant does not provide details as to where and how often the regularly scheduled PLC and COP session were. This information would have made the claims more coherent.

The LEA will ensure the quality of all content through a curriculum review process, which includes teams of teachers' reviews of content with a rubric aligned to the CCSS and Tennessee's curriculum standards. The applicant noted that sample high quality resources would be accessible to educators online through the learning portal. How long these resources would remain available and how often would these resources be revised/modified/updated was not included. In addition, teachers would complete modules on designing blended classes and students will participate in mini course versions of the modules. The number of modules is unclear and would all students participate in the course versions or selected students are not addressed.

The instructional management system will allow learning objects to be linked to the CCSS, and recommend instructional content based on student's results on formative assessments by standard. It is noted that in year 1, educators in the Platform schools would be trained on how to use instructional management systems but the applicant does not address how or when this would take place for Strategy Cluster educators.

The applicant noted that the plan to personalize relationships with students and maximize student learning will be strengthened by a transformation of the recruitment strategy to ensure the LEA recruit, retain, and train educators with specific skills necessary to personalize learning and improve student achievement for multiple types of learners.

The applicant addressed each element and provided some supporting evidence but does not demonstrate a high quality plan as defined in this notice. Although the applicant provided general evidence for each of the elements, sufficient supporting details were missing. It was not clear how year one and year two would look as it relates to teaching and leading. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 14 is provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant described the Central Office Effectiveness Transformational Leadership Group (former district's central office). This group is comprised of district and community leaders and advisors assembled to assess the efficiency and quality of support and processes provided by the central office. MNPS has transformed the role and function of the central office through substantial reorganization of existing departments, the intentional shifting of instructional resources from the central office to schools and the creation of an Office of Innovation to transform the district's lowest-performing schools to exemplary high-performing schools. A project director will communicate with Platform and Strategy Cluster leadership teams, as well as the DDIT, and bring information and recommendations to central office executive leadership through a formalized continuous improvement protocol process.</p> <p>Platform and Strategy Cluster schools will have autonomy over structures, including school schedules, staffing and budgets, to support the most innovative practices to implement personalized learning environments. All school leadership teams have autonomy over the implementation of master scheduling, course offerings and class schedules. School leadership teams in Title I schools (83% of MNPS schools) have autonomy over exception pay, Intersession, which is a component of MNPS' "balanced calendar" aiming to return summer learning loss, and the use of extended learning time grants. The applicant provided sufficient and justifiable evidence to support its assertions for this element.</p> <p>The applicant referred to blending classroom environments where students may be working at different rates and on different curricular objectives. Mastery learning rejects the "one size fits all" approach to instruction. More information is needed to clearly demonstrate how students would progress and earn credit based on mastery. The applicant was vague in responding to this element.</p> <p>Grading for Understanding provides feedback to students and their parents on their progress in meeting standards and requires teachers to allow students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple, comparable ways. The multiple opportunities vary in method such as: projects, presentations, formative assessment, summative assessment, performance tasks, portfolio assessments and written performance. The applicant provided sufficient evidence for this element.</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence of learning resources and instructional practices that are fully adaptable and accessible to all students. Instructional practices such as blended learning, project-based learning, peer mentoring and flexible student grouping will support the achievement of all students, and provide opportunities for practices and resources targeted to the needs of special populations.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant addressed each element and provided some evidence to support its claims. More details describing how the central office would provide support and services to all participating schools would have strengthened the response. In addition, supporting details on how students would be given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery are needed to clearly justify the applicant's claims. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 11 is given.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In order to ensure that all students and families have access to the tools needed to support and engage in personalized learning – regardless of income - MNPS has developed a bold plan that harnesses the latest in 21st century technology, and a powerful network of public and private support. The district will launch the transformative Anytime Access for All initiative for our Platform and Strategy Cluster schools. Anytime Access for All ensures all students have access to relevant and engaging digital content and resources that facilitate learning during out of school time, as a means to bridge the digital divide our economically disadvantaged students face.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant noted discounted broadband services (Appendix D.2.b) and discounted computing devices as avenues to ensure parents and students have access to necessary content and tools. To create the school and district infrastructure to support personalized learning via technology, we will build and enhance broadband internet access in our Platform and Strategy Cluster schools.</p> <p>The applicant noted that all middle school students, parents and educators will have access to digital content and resources through multiple platforms that will be integrated into one online portal provided by the district's instructional management system, enabling a convenient, single sign-on access. Students, parents, and educators will have personalized modules to access student data, depending on their needs in supporting student learning, and adhering to policies securing student privacy.</p> <p>Opportunities for training will be provided for families and community members around tools, content, and other learning resources through our partnership with Connected Nation and Connected TN, as well as through other community</p>		

organizations offering such services. Connected Nation will provide technical support (online or phone) for those subscribing to internet access or purchasing technology through the Connected Tennessee program. The applicant noted that Information Technology specialists who are assigned to schools will provide onsite support to teachers and school staff.

All data available to students and parents are only accessible via secured login to ensure the confidentiality of student information. Parents and students can access data in the GradeSpeed and SchoolNet/StudentNet systems.

As it relates to the schools use of interoperable data systems, the applicant noted that MNPS has a technical team that is able to create “packages” of data that are sent from and consumed by various systems automatically without manual processing. This technical capacity allows MNPS to establish “linkages” between systems that facilitate interoperability. In addition, MNPS has successfully piloted interoperable data sharing with community partners through a local Promise Neighborhood initiative, as well as the Nashville After-Zone Alliance.

The applicant clearly addresses each of the four elements and provided evidence for its claims. Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has shown signs of a high quality plan. For elements a and b, additional details about how stakeholders fit into the scheme would have strengthened the applicant’s claims. As a result, a score of 9 is given.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>As it relates to a continuous improvement process, the applicant noted that an evaluation team consisting of a least one external evaluation consultant and multiple members of the Department of Research, Assessment, and Evaluation at MNPS will collaborate to develop and implement a sustainable approach to monitoring and providing feedback regarding the personalized learning strategies and the ensuing impact. The continuous improvement approach proposed is derived from a combination of evaluation theories, including participatory/collaborative evaluation, organizational learning, and theory-driven evaluation, but with a grounding in utilization focused and developmental evaluation.</p> <p>To address inquiry needs by formative and summative evaluations, the applicant will employ a model that includes iterative program evaluative feedback from implementation and outcome measures. The applicant provided a table that displayed three columns with the following headings: Six Characteristics of Traditional Evaluation; Next Generation Evaluation Approaches ADDITIONS to Traditional Evaluation Approaches; and Application to Personalized Learning Continuous Feedback and Improvement Model. The table provided supporting details to justify the applicant’s claims.</p> <p>The applicant commented that information communicated to stakeholders will be structured around the areas of (1) implementation, (2) short term outcomes, and (3) long-term outcomes. Appendix A.2.a presents a schedule of feedback within a continuous improvement framework that provides information on selected measures at quarterly and/or annual intervals. The table provided a detailed list of the types of information that will be available for feedback at specific times throughout the duration of the grant.</p> <p>Instrumental to the plan for quality development, sustainability, and district scale-out of the personalized learning strategies, the applicant referenced the creation of personalized learning strategy rubrics that correspond to the six strategy networks. The rubrics will serve multiple purposes: (1) self-evaluation tools for framework development, monitoring, and continuous improvement; (2) district-wide evaluation tools to monitor the quality and implementation fidelity of the strategies for communication and targeted resource deployment; and (3) identification of best practices for recognition and promotion of the district-wide spread and sustainability of the strategies.</p> <p>Overall, a continuous improvement plan is provided but it is not high quality. Although the applicant addressed each element and provided supporting details, evidence as to how each component of the process worked together was vague. Additional details depicting the rationale, timeline, and goals for the improvement plan would have strengthened the applicant claims. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 12 is provided.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provided a table illustrating multiple parties who will collaborate to target stakeholders with appropriately tailored strategies and messaging. Formats for Continuous Feedback and Engagement include student ambassador presentations, campaign; parent organization presentation; newsletters; online presence: webpage, Facebook, twitter; etc.</p>		

The applicant provided responsible parties for each format as well as the key stakeholder group targets.

The table provided sufficient evidence and supported the details provided in E1. The applicant has clearly demonstrated a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement for internal and external stakeholders. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 5 is given.

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

The applicant noted that in order to ensure consistency in common language and clarity around how MNPS approaches improvement, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) continuous improvement cycle will be used to review and improve all measures. This process addresses the ongoing need of MNPS to ensure its performance measures enhance versus hinder work efforts and add value.

Performance measures will be used within the rubrics, across the board to compare and gauge implementation progress.

The applicant provided the required number of performance measures. Strategy facilitators and teams will act on their autonomy to contribute to the creation of metrics of how well students and adults are progressing towards project goals. The DDIT will also further development and focus on additional measures to ensure their role as a support function to schools is truly meeting the needs of its customers in a collaborative proactive manner.

The applicant provided tables illustrating performance measures required for all applicants (highly effective teachers and principals; effective teacher and principal); performance measures required for applicants with participating students in grades 4-8 and 5-8 (on track to college and career readiness); academic leading indicator-Explore composite score; TCAP mean percent proficient/advanced reading language arts; TCAP mean percent proficient/advanced math; TCAP mean percent proficient/advanced science; TCAP mean achievement level increase).

Rationales for selecting each measure were described and how the measure would provide leading information tailored to the plan were provided and added support to the performance measure data tables. The applicant provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures. Based on the evidence, a score of 5 is given.

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

To evaluate the effectiveness of the personalized learning strategies, the evaluation team will examine the district's performance on the short- and long-term outcomes delineated as performance measures, with a focus on linking details of implementation quality and fidelity (using the personalized learning rubrics) to the outcomes. To further the understanding of how specific personalized learning strategies impact outcomes in students, analyses will be used to determine whether there were differential effects by demographic characteristics and by level of implementation fidelity.

The applicant stated that the purpose of this analytic strategy is to provide MNPS with information about which strategies are most effective for whom, thus informing decisions about how resources, including time, staff, and money can be targeted more effectively.

In addition, the evaluation team will rely utilize three methodologies to determine the effectiveness of the implemented strategies: an interrupted time series analysis, case study of the six personalized learning strategies, and social network analysis (SNA) of all schools, the strategy clusters, and engaged external partners. The applicant provided supporting details to describe each methodology.

The results of the SNA will improve knowledge-sharing and management, identify power influencers (aka "lynchpins"), increase capacity to work smarter by focusing on efficiency and effectiveness of the network, and facilitate development of novel ways to improve connectivity.

The applicant stated that the case study approach will allow the evaluation team to present a more holistic, extensive description of the details of the issues of developing and implementing the personalized learning strategies, exploration of barriers and best-practices to that development and implementation, as well as of the process of networking within and between the strategy clusters.

Based on the evidence provided, the applicant has demonstrated a high quality plan of evaluating the effectiveness of investments. The applicant has provided well supported evidence. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 5 is given.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified funds that will support the project. Funds from other sources used to support the project totaled \$ 58,088,739.00 for the four years. Several of the sources included general operating funds, Race to the Top in Year 1; Title I and School Improvement Grants; Title IIA; and Teacher Incentive Fund.</p> <p>Based on the figures, the budget appears to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed ideas. The four year budget totaled \$ 83,088,739.00 with 7,487,467.00 allotted to personnel; 493,000.00 for travel; 6,953,000.00 for supplies; and 6,130,000.00 designated for contractual costs.</p> <p>The applicant noted that anticipated purchases of items such as laptops, printers and desktop computers with an individual cost of less than \$5,000 are included in Budget Category 5 Supplies. In Appendix F.1, there is a graphical representation of selected key budget components of this application. In addition, total grant funds requested for project coordination and evaluation costs totaled 1,862,730.85 and 23,137,269.15 for platform and strategy cluster schools.</p> <p>The applicant noted if the funds would be used as a one-time investment versus an ongoing cost. For example, the applicant noted that non-recurring mileage costs of the Project Director, Grant Specialist and Internal Evaluator for school visits under the travel category for project coordination and evaluation.</p> <p>The applicant provided a general budget in the form of tables but a descriptive budget rationale was missing. This makes it difficult to justify some of the figures noted in the table. For example, it is unclear how year one's budget differs from year 2 considering when particular schools are brought on (i.e. Platform Schools and the Cluster Schools). Although cost descriptions and assumptions are provided for each budget category of both projects (Coordination and Evaluation and Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools), the evidence is too general. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 6 is provided.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant noted that the proposal is built on one time investments which will build capacity, support sustainability of project goals, and enable scaling of effective practices across all schools.</p> <p>As it relates to Central District Restructuring and School Flexibility, the applicant noted that through the transformation of district resource allocation, current school resources will be repurposed to sustain changes in participating schools that demonstrate effectiveness and to spread these effective practices to remaining schools in the district. The applicant does not provide a clear description of how this would take place; therefore, the claims are not justified.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant shared that MNPS commits to establish a strategic compensation system through the leveraging of State Race to the Top grant funds. The applicant referenced how this model would include components that would ensure that the district's highest poverty schools are staffed with the best educators but did not provided examples of these components. The applicant commits to expanding its current partnership with Public Impact, a national expert in rethinking school staffing to improve student achievement, to work with the Platform school adopting Strategy Four, expanding the reach of highly effective educators but provides limited details as to how this would take place.</p> <p>The applicant noted that project initiatives implemented at participating schools would be sustained and scaled up through increased capacity at the school and district level. The applicant did not provide supporting details to support this claim. With regard to the data warehouse, MNPS has committed to continue those positions through local funds at the expiration of the grant in September, 2014. Examples of these "local funds" would have strengthened the applicant's assertions.</p> <p>The applicant noted that Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County government has been committed to fully funding education. A quote from Mayor Karl F. Dean adds support to the applicant's claims; "My priorities as mayor are improving schools, making neighborhoods safer, and bringing more and better jobs to Nashville,".</p> <p>MNPS proposes to sustain and scale up effective personalized learning practices by: 1) assisting schools to sustain only those practices found to improve student outcomes (Section E- Continuous Improvement) and to abandon others; and 2) supporting the goals, strategies, and objectives in Education 2018, MNPS's strategic plan, the foundation for school success.</p> <p>In addition, the DDIT will ensure that any participating school using contractual services will develop an action plan that transitions capacity-building to the school-level so that financial resources to support effective practices after the grant expires will not be necessary.</p>		

The applicant commented that successful school practices will be sustained and scaled by the implementation of district-wide reforms integral to Education 2018. One of its major interventions, school-based autonomy and accountability, is supported by the implementation of school-based budgeting.

The applicant noted that by partnering with teacher education preparation programs to ensure effective personalized learning practices are incorporated in their pre-service programs, the LEA can build a pipeline of teachers facile in personalized learning to sustain effective practices across the district after this grant expires.

Based on the evidence provided and the letters of support from local government some evidence of sustainability was demonstrated. Overall, the applicant makes general assertions not supported by adequate and justifiable evidence. The evidence provided does not demonstrate a high quality sustainability plan; therefore, a score of 7 is provided.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to focus on students' social emotional and behavioral needs for the competitive preference priority. The applicant highlights partnerships with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (COC), Alignment Nashville (AN), and the Pencil Foundation (Pencil). Leveraging the established structures and processes related to these partnerships, MNPS will utilize a full-service community schools model to integrate wrap-around services to support student success.

The applicant asserts that since Community Achieves will be utilized as reinforcement for the general personalized learning initiative, the performance measures presented (Section E) to monitor for continuous improvement and evaluation of effectiveness will also be used to monitor the implementation and impact of the Community.

Supporting details are provided for the measures: parent and family engagement, enrollment of parents in Gradespeed, school climate-safe and supportive schools, meal participation of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, mental health-appropriate referral and receipt of services, and collaboration among schools and external partners around school identified needs.

Program Manager will be used to track cohorts of students involved in extended learning and other community support programs through Community Achieves. Student-level data will be used to target personalized resources to individual and groups of students. Cluster Support Team will be comprised of Cluster Assistant, a Family and Youth Service Assistant, a Family Involvement Specialist, at least one Social Worker, and some portion of a FTE Community Outreach Specialist.

Within the RTTT-D schools, the partnership based on the Community Achieves model would integrate education and other services through the use of the Invitation to Participate process discussed in the Toolkit on page 10 of Appendix CPP5.

The applicant addressed each element of the competitive preference priority and provided sufficient supporting details. To add strength to the applicant's claims, additional details are needed for element 1 and 4. These supporting details would have provided a clearer understanding of the applicant's claims. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 8 is provided.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the four core educational assurance areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform educators with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around chronically low-achieving schools.

Appendix A.1.a illustrated a summary of MNPS reform initiatives from 2009-14 showing 5 goals (collaborative culture, standards and assessments, teachers and leaders, data systems, and turnaround and the strategies associated for each. For example, Goal 3: Create a self-renewing organization of great teachers and leaders; the strategies include instructional

leadership (principal and teacher leadership institutes, development of school based leadership teams) and accountability for results (TEAM teacher evaluation system).

The applicant asserted that the proposal is strengthened by a three-pronged focus around personalized learning: personalized supports, personalized relationships, and personalized approaches. Each strategy aims to ensure students take ownership of their learning and connect learning to their life goals. In addition to annually updated individualized learning plans (ILPs); all participating students will create a 10-year plan during 8th grade.

The applicant identified a strategy to personalize approaches to learning is by grounding classroom instruction; project-based learning (PBL). In PBL, students are exposed to an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question or challenge (AppendixC.1.f).

The applicant noted that the LEA's approach to professional learning is based on networked learning communities sharing best practices and collaborating around problems of practice. The implementation plan and timeline will serve as a catalyst for strengthening the networking among and between Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools (Section (A)(2)).

Based on the evidence provided, a score of met is given.

Total	210	160
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0230TN-2 for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has provided strong and ample evidence as detailed in appendix A.1.a regarding its vision and plan across each of the four core educational assurance areas.

a1. The work of adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and workplace are clearly outlined in the applicant's 2013-2014 implementation plan. The implementation plan includes key components such as associated assessments, models of content materials and resources, training and support mechanisms, and leadership development across all of the major subjects (e.g. math, ELA, science, social studies, and CTE). The applicant has detailed specific assessments for each of the grades with clear and realistic timelines. The wealth of details related to the implementation of college and career ready standards come together in a cohesive and comprehensive way in supporting the applicant's vision of reform.

a2. The applicant has demonstrated a clear description of the data system infrastructure that exists in measuring student growth and success. The evidence of the virtual data wall provides further clarity as to the types of data that can be accessed by educators and grouped for reporting purposes. While the applicant has showcased in impressive data system that is accessible to key stakeholders, it is not clear how this data system has been used by each of the major stakeholders (e.g. students, teachers, principals, parents, and district leaders) and whether this robust system has had significant impact in improving instruction.

a3. The applicant has provided strong evidence for a comprehensive system in recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and school leaders as part of the state's RTTT work. The comprehensiveness of each component of the teacher development system is detailed in the appendix with great clarity and the applicant provides evidence of both the related research that supports this work and the timeline of work since 2010.

a4. The applicant has provided a clear and strong rationale as to the work in its lower performing schools, also known as the Innovation Zone (iZone). The innovation strategies are clearly articulated within the appendix and connected to the work of personalized academic experiences.

b. The applicant as provided a large comprehensive vision for transforming education across all of the district schools as detailed in the Education 2018 master plan. The projected student outcomes are clearly detailed within this plan and the six major strategies supporting personalized learning are well detailed in how students would move through this plan. While the tools and resources listed within the Personalized Learning Support charts itemize some of the larger strands of work engaged by students, there is less clarity on the types of common and individual tasks students will engage in over the course of the project period that relates directly to students' academic interest.

c. The applicant has not fully described what the classroom experience will be like for students who will be participating in personalized learning environments. The details that are included in the appendix related to the applicant's personalized learning environment are written with a strong research and theoretical perspective, but it is not clear how this ideas will be translated in a concrete way into students' classroom learning experiences. For example, three of the major goals are justified and well supported by research literature (e.g. personalized supports, personalized approaches to learning, and personalized relationships). However, there is a gap between the theory behind what works to actualizing these ideas (e.g. student goal setting processes, early warning indicators, blended learning, and multi-classroom leadership model) in the context of the applicant's target schools, classrooms, and student populations. There is a disconnect between detailing out the needs of the student, classroom, and school population to the proposed vision that has been detailed by the applicant regarding personalized learning environment, especially at the middle school level (as targeted by the applicant).

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

The applicant has provided a strong description of the process it plans to use to select the first tier of schools for the year one of participation called Platform Schools. The full self-assessment and interview guide is detailed clearly within the appendix as to the school readiness selection criteria by which the first set of schools will participate. These readiness criteria are well laid out by the applicant across five key areas.

The work of the Strategy Cluster Schools is ambitious. It is not clear whether all of the middle schools listed will be mandated to be part of the Strategy Cluster Schools or that they will have the option to not be part of the Strategy Cluster Schools. For example, it is unclear what the applicant will do for schools that may not meet the necessary readiness factors for the Strategy Cluster Schools. This is important to acknowledge because there are only limited resources to be invested in the secondary phase of the proposed work with these schools. Additionally, the applicant has not addressed the readiness factors of the Strategy Cluster Schools. That is, the applicant has not provided evidence as to how the rest of the middle school in the system will be ready to take on similar work started by the Platform Schools. The one strategy of an Annual Personalized Learning Summit held in February 2015 is not a comprehensive strategy in preparing any of the middle schools to be part of the Strategy Cluster Schools. It is also not clear how at the end of this summit, the Strategy Cluster Schools will be "connected" to the "Platform Cluster Schools".

The applicant has fully detailed the list of participating schools. It would be helpful for the applicant to tier this full set of schools in terms of their projected readiness factors. Because there are a number of schools that may be competing to be the initial Platform Schools, it is not clear how the rubric and the team will be working together to select the final set of six middle schools who will be part of the Platform schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a medium-quality plan in describing how its reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. The applicant has provided a clear outline of activities and timeline of work under three major categories of work within the timetable provided in the appendix. The applicant has not included key components that make up a comprehensive plan. For example, the applicant has not detailed out persons of responsibilities for each of the activities listed in the timeline. The team composition of the District Design and Implementation Team (DDIT) is not fully clarified. That is, the composition of this leadership team is not clear. For example, the applicant does not clarify which district leaders and researchers/evaluators will participate on this team. It would be helpful to know the existing titles or current personnel who would be part of the DDIT work if that information is known. If that information is still to be determined, it would be helpful for the applicant to state that as there are multiple positions for the DDIT team that are to be hired. The ambiguity of the DDIT team has implications as to who will be leading and shaping the proposed work.

The activities are clearly listed within the timeline chart but there is a lack of rationale connected to each of the activities

that are listed on the timetable. Additionally, it is not fully clear how each of these activities work together in a coherent way as a set of strategies in reaching the applicant goals. There's a disconnect between the goals and the activities that are listed.

For some of the activities, there are a couple of small items that need greater clarification. These include programs such as "Connected Nations" and "Social Solutions." These two examples highlight the disconnect between the activities that are proposed and the rationale behind what these activities are and how these activities would support the larger goals of the proposal.

The applicant has not fully articulated its outcome goals across the various stages of implementation between the two sets of schools. The narrative doesn't fully articulate a strong theory of action in how the work of the platform schools will then be translated and scaled up across all 51 schools listed in the selection criterion A2. There's also a mismatch in the number of participating schools versus the number of Strategy Cluster Schools. That is, 51 schools are listed as participating schools. Of these 51 schools, 6 will be Platform schools and 45 schools will be the Strategy Cluster Schools. However, in the timeline provided in the appendix, the applicant has only provided support for 6 groups of 4-6 Strategy Cluster Schools. At the maximum, that only supports 36 additional schools. It is unclear whether all 51 schools listed will participate based on the evidence provided by the applicant.

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

The applicant has detailed out the types of summative assessments that it plans to use in regards to selection criterion A4a. The rationale behind how the growth rates for these summative assessments are clear in the narrative, but less clearly demonstrated in the associated table that follows the narrative. For example, for the goal area for math, it is unclear what grade levels the applicant is using in determining the growth rates for each sub-population listed. There's a danger in lumping scores across a grade-span as it may mask strengths and weaknesses across grade levels, and across school sites. In an earlier chart with participating schools, the schools listed have various grade spans. As a result, because the student outcomes chart are not detailed by schools or by grade spans, it is difficult to ascertain how these figures were calculated as an overall average of growth by each subject area.

The applicant has specified grade spans for selection criterion A4b. This piece of data is helpful as it provides a framework of how the achievement gaps may have been calculated. However, at the end of the grant period, there is still a significant gap among the various subgroups. This is a similar case with the graduation rates and college enrollment rates where there are larger ranges in the graduation and college enrollment rates among various subgroups. In taking into account the applicant's vision of work, there is not a lot of specifications as to how the strategies and actions proposed would be targeted strategically in aggressively closing these gaps among subgroups and how the work would be differentiated to support the specific needs of these subgroups (e.g. Hispanic, Black, LEP/ELL, and SWD/ED).

As a result, the applicant scored a mid-range of 5/10 because it is not fully apparent how the applicant's vision will result in the improved student learning and performance and increased equity among the subgroups such as Hispanic, Black, LEP/ELL, and SWD/ED.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided evidence as to a record of success in the past four years in the areas in the areas of student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. The applicant has provided details as to how the district has supported academic achievement in comparison to other district schools in meeting "intermediate" status. Data growth rates averages for the major subjects in grades 3-8 have been shown in charts. Some of the charts show cluster and average data in ways that makes it difficult to assess the progress by specific grade levels. Because the outcomes measures are often depicted as average growth of multiple grades or by average of multiple years, it is less clear what trends exist by grade levels or by specific years so that it is easier to assess whether the applicant has a demonstrated a clear record of success in the past four years.

The applicant has done a strong job in describing the work and reform measures at the lowest performing schools that have received the SIG grants. However, the data for these schools are more current, and do not go back historically for 4

years, as the SIG grant funding dates back to 2010. The applicant has highlighted examples of success in these SIG schools. These examples include having 85% of the 20 schools demonstrating significant improvements in student performance and one school recognized by the state in the top 5% on TVAAS scores. However, it would be helpful to clarify what the standard was for demonstrated significant improvements. It would be helpful to understand the metrics used in assessing the academic growth rates of these 20 schools and see clear evidence of the growth over time.

The applicant hasn't fully addressed selection criterion B1c in the narrative. It is unclear whether student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided strong rationale and justification of the district's processes, practices, and investments as detailed in selection criterion B2. The applicant has demonstrated evidence in how the information in each of the four selection criteria a-d are made available to the public. Examples of each of the four selection criteria (a-d) are detailed further in the appendix (e.g. sample school based budget). Additionally, the applicant understands the shifts in practices that need to take place so that the processes, practices, and investments better support student-learning outcomes. Overall, the applicant has provided a robust set of evidence that highlights its own understanding of the fiscal and budgetary transparencies that need to take place in the district and how resource allocations have implications to how schools use funds and improve student learning outcomes.

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

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has produced robust evidence as to how the state context is able to support successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement its personalized learning environment. The applicant has fully detailed the impact of activities from Tennessee's Race To the Top state level competition in providing the overarching mechanisms for the statewide implementation of CCSS and associated assessments (PARCC). Additionally, the applicant has detailed the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) which is a promising framework in developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers, especially in hard to staff schools. The applicant district is modeling its own teacher effectiveness system with funds from an external TIF grant. These two major levers in standards and assessments as well as teacher effectiveness provides promising conditions for the applicant district to undertake the proposed work in personalized learning.

The applicant has also detailed out the autonomies it has under the State in leading the work within their school site. Examples of the outcomes of these autonomies include the participation in the state's Achievement School District (ASD) and the creation of a specially designed local "Innovation Zone." Both of these strategies provide alternative mechanisms by which the district can try out alternative ways in uplifting students' academic outcomes.

The strategy of the virtual schools as a method of supporting the applicant's vision of personalized learning environment is not fully backed up with evidence and data that this method holds promise for the applicant's student population. While the idea of virtual schools may provide a greater number of students to gain credit in an alternative matter, it is not clear whether this method is the most effective way to support students' college and career readiness in both the short term and the long term.

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

15

11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided 92 letters of support in the appendix from a range of stakeholders that include a letter from the Metro Nashville Education Association. This is a significant and strong representation of the local, regional, and state support that the applicant has garnered for this proposal.

The stakeholder engagement level for the four major constituencies are clearly articulated and the evidence is provided in terms of the signatures gathered by the applicant found in the appendix. Based on achievement data from the subgroup populations, it is less clear if the applicant had specific strategies in reaching out and engaging with student and parent populations of subgroups such as Black, Hispanic, LEP/ELL, and SWD/ED. These subgroup populations of stakeholders are important as the applicant has stated aggressive goals in closing the achievement gaps for these subpopulations.

The evidence of the engagement with the teacher and teacher leadership populations at participating schools doesn't correspond with the total number of participating schools listed by the applicant. For example, the signature pages and

feedback from teachers are dated from 9/26/12, prior to the release of the RTTT-2013 priorities and proposal guidelines. It is unclear whether these teacher leaders are fully understood the parameters of the applicant proposal at that time. Additionally, it is not clear how this subset of teacher leaders communicated and represented each of their school sites in supporting the proposal. The applicant has not made it clear whether the development of the personalized learning environment has been an ongoing process that predates the release of the RTTT-2013 proposal guidelines and how this ongoing work is aligned with the priorities of the RTTT-2013 competition.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant scored a 13/20 for this selection criterion because it provided strong evidence in highlighting the activities and rationale that students would engage in the applicant's vision of a personalized learning environment. Taken as a whole, the applicant did not provide a high-quality plan that takes all of these components of student learning and bring them together in a coherent and comprehensive plan. That is, not all activities listed were explicitly aligned to the applicant's goals, the rationale behind all of the activities were not consistent across each of the major partnerships engaged in the work, the timeline and parties responsible for each activity was also not fully delineated. The sub-plan provided by the Buck Institute found in the appendix provided the greatest clarity as to how the work would be implemented by the applicant. Even within that plan, the rationale behind each of the activities was not fully clarified.

Additionally, because this is a two-phase implementation process with both the Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools, there was not enough clarity provided by the applicant in how each of the major strategies and activities proposed would be scaled over the project period from 6 schools to all 51 middle schools in the district.

Below are some of highlights and weaknesses across the sub-criterion within C1:

The strategy of working with students in creating a 10-year plan starting in 8th grade holds promise for students that learning is a key to their success in accomplishing their goals. It is less clear who will be taking responsibility for this work at the school site and how the applicant envisions the work will continue after the students graduate from high school and enter post-secondary education or the workforce. Similarly, it is unclear how students would be "collaborating" with teachers, administrators, parents and other adults in establishing goals and a map of their learning at the beginning of each school year. Again, the responsibilities of carrying out this work are not fully explicated even though the student activities are well detailed.

The applicant has provided evidence of a strong data collection system (e.g. data walls and instructional management systems such as SchoolNet and StudentNet) that allows multiple stakeholders to access and provide feedback to student learning. The rationale behind student ownership of learning is clear and the applicant has provided details as to ways students can engage in their own learning through mechanisms such as parent-teacher conferences, project based learning opportunities, and the use of social media platforms for student driven learning.

The partnership with CASEL in building up tools and resources for students' social-emotional growth and development holds promise. It is less clear how this work would be woven into the academic learning (both face to face and blended) environments as proposed by the applicant.

The work that describes how students would have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning is vague. It is unclear what explicit strategies and activities the district will undertake for their subgroups such as Black, Hispanic, LEP/ELL, and SWD/ED. The applicant discusses possible engagement with community partners but does not list or explain who the partners will be and how they would work with the applicant in increasing participating students' access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives.

The blended learning work as described is promising in theory but the applicant has not detailed clear rationale behind each of the possible strategies that would be employed at the various school sites and what tools students would be using in achieving their proposed student outcomes. For example, the applicant lists "classroom rotation models, flipped-classrooms, flex models, and/or self-blend or enriched virtual models" as possible ways in expanding the school's' capacity to support student learning. Each of these ideas have positive and unintended consequences that are not fully addressed by the applicant the rationale behind the selection of these mechanisms for each teacher across all participating schools and students are not clear.

The strategy of employing student ambassadors to provide training and support to students holds promise. The rationale

behind this strategy is clearly detailed and is based on the applicant's own work from the high school ambassador program. It is less clear who in the school, district, and/or partnership would be leading this work and what the timeline of scaling this strategy is to reach all 51 schools over the course of the project period.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant did not provide the details and components that are necessary for a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching at its participating schools. While there are a number of strong ideas that were mentioned within the narrative, there was a lack of clarity regarding each of the practices that would be instituted by the schools within the project period and the actual implementation mechanisms for each of the proposed activities was weak and limited in details. The applicant provided a number of promising strategies listed in the bullet points below. However, it was unclear how these strategies worked together in a cohesive and coherent manner in a comprehensive plan of action for this selection criterion.

- The idea of "Community of Practice" (COP) is not fully articulated as to how it will be implemented between the Platform Schools and the Strategy Cluster Schools. That is, it is unclear who the persons responsibly will be leading this work, when this work would take place, and what activities would these COPs engage in over the course of the project period in achieving specific, measureable goals. Likewise, the applicant uses a lot of language around how schools would "collaborate" within each school and across schools in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Again, it is unclear the mechanism by which schools and the personnel within the school would collaborate with each other over the course of the project period.
- It is unclear how the applicant's plan will select "external vendor" around supporting its college and career readiness work. For example, it is not clear how the applicant will ensure quality of partnership, or which organizing group would be working with this vendor as there are two phases of work that are happening between the Platform Schools and the Strategy Cluster Schools.
- The role of teacher leader responsibilities is expansive. It is not clear what the teacher leader responsibilities are at the both the Platform Schools and the Strategy Cluster Schools sites in managing the COPs, PLCs, and community partnerships. Similarly, the applicant mentions that data coaches would be deployed at the school site, but it is unclear how these data coaches would be working with teacher leaders, how many of these data coaches would be at each school site, and how their activities as a collective are part of the applicant's larger strategy and goals.
- It is not clear who will be part of the "blended learning advisory committee" as this group holds an important role in selecting the instructional resources that will be in used by schools and how the practices are implemented.
- The applicant mentions that "formative assessment practices" will be used in how educators will adapt instruction for students, but the details listed in the Buck Institute Plan lack a cohesiveness as to how all of the activities work together in formatively assessing students' needs and capabilities over the course of the project period.
- The applicant mentions the "self-evaluations" that will be used as processes and tools to match student needs and resources as described within selection criterion C2b(iii). However, it's not clear what self-evaluation tools are, who will be taking part in them, and how the data will be used and interpreted as a full feedback mechanism to inform students' personalized learning plans and individualized support.

For selection criterion C2c(i), there is not a clear timeline in how communities of practice will be used to support both the SOCL model, the cadre of online resources, the evaluation outcomes that are available in improving individual and collective educator effectiveness. While the SOCL model is well detailed within the appendix, it is not clear how this specific model will be implemented across the applicant's participating school over the course of the project period in driving applicant's goals and outcomes.

The framework around how the Platform Schools will train the Strategy Cluster Schools is well defined. The ideas around the model where "expert" schools train the next set of implementation schools hold promise. The general activities such how to provide high-quality feedback from observations, using the SOCL model and identifying the instructional shifts in the CCSS are strong ideas. However, this work in itself is not fully detailed as part of an implementation plan that takes into account how this work would be implemented over the course of the project period.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8
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(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For sub-criterion D1, the applicant received an overall score of 8/15 because it provided general components of an implementation plan as it described the practices, policies, and rules that facilitated learning as detailed in components a-e.

a. The applicant has detailed out how the COE TLG group has been working together since 2009 in the reorganizational structure of the district's central office. It would be helpful to know who the district personnel were on that team who will also be part of the proposed work. The partnerships (e.g. CPRE and Gates Foundation) detailed provides the applicant with rigorous partnerships that can assist with translating how the district infrastructure and reorganization can have meaningful impact on services to participating schools.

The applicant does a good job detailing out the activities that it plans to undertake in supporting the Platform and Cluster Strategy Schools. However, it is unclear how central office personnel will take on the responsibilities in implementing each of these activities for both sets of schools over time.

b. The applicant has provided strong descriptors as to how school leadership teams would have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors that are listed within selection criterion D1b. These descriptors of how the district is supporting school-based autonomy could be further bolstered by additional evidence as to how this is currently taking place in its potential participating schools.

c and d. The applicant vaguely describes how the mastery/credit recovery benefits participating schools and students. While the ideas around the rationale behind mastery/credit recovery are explained, the rationale is not clearly connected to how it is intended for the participating Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools it intends to serve.

e. It is unclear what activities the applicant will undertake in closing the achievement gaps for the 25% ELL population and the other subpopulations it has listed a high-need. One of the strategies of working with the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute holds promise for bilingual students in the applicant's district. It would be helpful for the applicant to detail out a full history of reform efforts and practices that provide opportunities for their special populations. For example, the work with SIOF and the funding of inclusion facilitators are promising but it is not clear how these practices are actualized in the potential set of schools who will take on the work of personalized learning as proposed by the applicant.

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

a. The applicant's "Anytime Access for All Initiative" is promising and well detailed in how the partnership will provide support to the applicant district in five key areas as listed in the appendix. The over strategy and plans for ensuring that all participating students, parents, and educators have access to the necessary tools for learning is robust. Key tasks and projects for this strand of work are well detailed in the appendix.

b. The applicant provides good support in how it plans to differentiate the implementation activities related to the Platform Schools. The level of technical support is adequate and comprehensive. It is less clear what the implementation strategy regarding the TASEL Strategy Cluster will be as the work is scaled up across many of the district's middle schools.

c. The applicant provides a general description as to the how students and families have access to various application systems that allow them to access student level data. It is less clear how the proposed system will provide recommendations for high school preparation focused on specific college and career pathways. The applicant needs to provide clear evidence as to how these systems are directly connected to their goals and activities proposed as their personalized learning vision.

d. The applicant has provided adequate evidence as to how it plans to sure that interoperable data systems are current in place that supports some of the functionalities listed in selection criterion D2(d). The applicant has also detailed out promising relationships and partnerships such as the local Promise Neighborhood initiative, as well as the Nashville After-Zone Alliance in supporting its efforts to create a fully interoperable data system.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear rationale and framework as to how a continuous improvement process would be carried through the project period. While the applicant has provided details around the components of a plan, not all of the components are present and the components of the plan do not work together in a comprehensive way. The comments below addresses the issues related to the various components that are important for a high quality plan.

Even though the applicant has identified that it will work with an external evaluation consultant and members of the district's Research, Assessment, and Evaluation team to collaborate in developing and implementing an approach to monitor and implement a continuous improvement feedback cycle, it is not clear how the members of this team will interact with the DDIT, the school and teacher leaders at both the Platform and Strategy Cluster Schools. There is a lack of clarity as to who will be involved in this work as the applicant states that there will be "stakeholders representing a variety of groups." However, it is not clear who these stakeholders will be, how they will chosen, nor how they will be engaged in the continuous improvement process.

The applicant has provided a strong rationale behind the theory of continuous improvement and a clear framework as to how it envisions the work to be implemented in their district. However, the details behind how each of the strategies will be implemented over the course of the project period is not fully explicated. Similarly, the applicant provides strong rationale behind the self-assessment rubric and clearly defines the multiple purposes that it will serve. Once these rubrics have been developed, it is unclear how often these cross-role teams will come together to collect the data, analyze the data, interpret the data and provide course-correction as informed by the continuous improvement processes.

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

The applicant has provided some of the key components of a plan to provide ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders. These key components include the activities that will take place to promote engagement and feedback, responsible parties for the specified activities and general stakeholder targets. The rationale behind the philosophy of why this type of engagement is important is also detailed. Additionally, the applicant clearly defined the partnerships who would be involved in implementing this work and they types of activities these partnerships would engage with in the feedback and engagement process.

The applicant hasn't detailed fully any clear communication and feedback goals that these activities listed would support nor a clear timeline of work over the course of the project period. Both of these are key components of would be critical as part of a high quality plan as described by selection criterion E2.

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

The applicant has clearly provided the performance measures that it plans to use across the various subgroups. Additionally, descriptors and rationale are provided for most of the performance measures listed and they are appropriate to the participating population. The performance measures provided are rigorous and ambitious and are looped back into the applicant's continuous improvement processes proposed.

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

The applicant has provided a number of evaluation strategies that are all robust in their ways of gathering and interpreting the data. The applicant fully details the three methodologies to determine the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and this set of methodologies provides concrete ways of evaluating the effectiveness of investments. However, taken as a whole, the applicant has not presented a comprehensive, high-quality plan that includes clear timetables of work, key deliverables, and persons of responsibilities for each major activity.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget provides all funds that will support the project as detailed in budget project tables. While the applicant has

provided cost description and assumptions for each budget item, the rationale behind the investments are not fully articulated. As a result, it is difficult to assess whether all of the budget items are reasonable and sufficient in supporting the development and implementation of the proposal. Additionally, it would be helpful to understand how the activities detailed within the budget come together in a full narrative that describes the direct connections between the budgeted activities to that of the strategies and goals as proposed by the applicant. For example in the narrative, there are more details about the various projects and strategies that the applicant has proposed. It would be helpful to see budgets broken up by specific major strategies and project goals so it's easier to understand how all of the budget costs come together in a comprehensive way.

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

10

4

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is unclear how the external vendor, Education Resource Strategies (ERS) will work directly with the project team and other partners in sustaining the longevity of the project plan beyond the grant period. For example, the applicant states that it will "transform district resource allocation" but it is unclear what this statement means and what processes and activities will be in place to make that transformation so that the project activities can be sustained after the grant period.

The transition from the current system of 8 school improvement facilitators to that of 13 school improvement facilitators is an actionable activity proposed by the applicant. However, it is not clear how these 13 school improvement facilitators would be disbursed across the participant middle schools as these 13 facilitators are slated for the entire district.

The applicant's current partnership with Public Impact has potential in working with Platform Schools in scaling up and sustaining its human capital and development strategy to additional schools. However, this partnership doesn't fully address how other strategies would be sustainable through this work as it explicitly states that Public Impact would work with Platform schools in adopting and expanding strategy four related to expanding the reach of highly effective educators.

There is a lack of clarity as to how the technology access piece will be sustained beyond the project period. Even though the applicant has a current relationship with Connected Tennessee and Anytime Access, there is not an actionable plan that is presented by the applicant as to what will happen to student and families' access to the tools and technology presented beyond the grant period.

Overall, the applicant earned a score of 4/10 within this selection criterion because it lacked an overall cohesive implementation plan as to how it will go about sustaining the breadth of project activities that are aligned to its project goals beyond the grant period. Even though the applicant discusses that it will sustain the most effective strategies for the district, there is not a clear plan of action that has been detailed out to support the grant activities beyond the grant period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a clear description of a coherence and sustainable partnership with Alignment Nashville (AN). Much of the work of AN is aligned with the overall vision and goals presented by the applicant. The reach of AN is significant as it is connected to over 400 community partner members. Additionally, nine of the applicant's middle schools are already part of this pilot program that was launched in February 2013. Depending on the results of these pilot relationships at the middle school, the relationship has the potential to growth across the set of participating middle schools.

The applicant has detailed out 6 performance measures that it intends to use in supporting both educational and family/community support outcomes. For the parent and family engagement indicator, it would be helpful to have provided a sample of the survey that was developed as part of the National Network of Partnership Schools. The scales that are provided across the five various domains are strong and comprehensive. Similarly, the school climate scales have also been detailed. Additionally, info regarding the types of questions and how the applicant and its partner will go about collecting and analyzing this data would be helpful in understanding how these results will be used in strengthening the partnership and advancing its overall goals.

The applicant has provided how it plans to track the selected indicators through its Program Manager system will be used in gathering the data and sharing it among stakeholders who have decision making power in advancing and improving upon the work. The Community Achieves toolkit holds promise as to possible ways of scaling up a model of work at

additional schools.

The applicant has a clear rationale and general plan of activities as to how it plans to integrate this partnership into the work and needs of the participating school site. The rationale behind having the schools specify their needs is described clearly. This is not a top-down initiative that forces schools to commit into partnerships that may not fit the needs of the school population.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has addressed Absolute Priority 1 (Personalized Learning Environments) for its students. The major strength of this proposal rests with its state and local support in focusing upon its middle schools on the targeted participants within the proposal. That is, the applicant has provided a strong case as to why this population needs the greatest attention and services within the K-12 continuum in its local context of Metro Nashville.</p> <p>Generally, the applicant has detailed strong partnerships and activities it will take on over the course of the project period. However, the major weakness within the proposal is the lack of specific regarding project plans for each of the major activities that work together in supporting a long-term vision and concrete strategy in sustaining the work beyond the project period.</p> <p>In regards to the four core educational assurances, the applicant has demonstrated ways that it will use college-ready standards and assessments that will be used to accelerate learning gains for its student populations. For example, the partnership with Buck Institute related to project based learning is most promising as it provided the most specificity as to what students, teachers, and partners would be doing over the course of the project period in personalizing the learning for its targeted students.</p> <p>The data management system and teacher effectiveness system proposed is bolstered by existing state RTTT funding so much of the work has been ongoing at the state and local level through this other policy mechanism. The potential funding provided by this grant has the potential to target its resources specifically toward the Platform and Cluster Strategy Schools.</p>		

Total	210	130
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Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0230TN-3 for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A (1) (a) The District articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision by creating a program that builds on its work in the four core educational assurance areas. The State's "First to the Top" plan helped to pave the way for "significant transformation" in the District. 1) adopting standards, etc. is addressed with the District's commitment to the Common Core</p>		

State Standards. The District has already developed and implement formal training and a process for analyzing and revising current curriculum to align to CCSS. Teh State is also part of the PARCC Consortium and the District will start to use them in 2014. 2) Data systems, etc. is addressed by the District with their use of "The Data Warehouse" which "provides a dashboard-sytle data system for educators, parents, and students to access real-time aggregated and disaggregated student information." Additionally, the District has implemented targeted and extensive professional learning for educators through the use of data coaches. 3) data driven evaluation systems, etc. is addressed with the use of the State's "sophisticated value-added assessment system," using student growth as one of multiple performance measures. The District is also partnering with other stakeholders to meet recruitment challenges and linking professional development to teacher effectiveness. 4) Expanded autonomy, etc. is met through the Districts creation of an "Office of Innovation" which focuses on the needs of the lowest-achieving schools in the District. These schools are "provided autonomy for decision-making in exchange for rigorous accountability.

A(1) (b) The District articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, etc. in their "Education 2018: MNPS' Plan to Become the Highest-Performing Urban District in the Country." This is a five-year strategic plan that "focues on three student-centered outcomes: students' academic, social, and emotional growth, year-over-year; student achievement; and the empowerment of students to lead their own learning." The District uses "personalized learning" as the "lever of change." As stated by the District "personalized learning moves beyond differentiated instructions and individualized attention because its primary driver is the empowerment of the learner to learn their own learning through increased voice, choice, and ownership of the learning process."

A(1) (c) The District describes leveraging new and existing resources to "transform" their middle school structures, "staffing models, compensation systems and classroom practices to create personalized learning environments." These personalized relationships will be supported by a myriad of people and programs. These are described in the District's overall reform initiatives, from Data Coaches, to Survey Data, Implementation of Common Core, to using Social Emotional Learning Standards, using ISTE-NETS Standards, Differentiation in Instruction, to Accelerated Learning Options, Magnet Schools, Non-Traditional Learning Environments, Digital Learning/Blended Learning. The only thing lacking is an actual articulation of how the classroom experience itself will change. Would want to see more description of what it means for the student and teacher to participate in personalized learning environments, rather than just saying that there will be one.

9

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

A (2) (a) The District describes a compelling process to select schools. Since the District is focused on providing personalized learning and points to the incredible role middle school success has in "determining academic success in high school and beyond," the District feels that it is best to start with their middle schools and then expand to the entire District. This will be a phased approach over four years, leveraging six existing schools which will serve as Platform schools, who will "incubate" innovated strategies and then scale to 24-28 "Strategy Cluster Schools" through creating a "network of schools," that will work together to achieve common goals for personalize learning.

A(2) (b) The District furnishes the list of all schools with the idea that out of the pool of all schools, the District will choose 24-28.

A(2) (c) The District provides the student data for all schools, but does not hint at which students from which schools will be choosen.

Additionally, the roll out of the program from the 6 platform schools to 24-28 in later years, draws into question both the budget and rules of serving the students of the grant all four years.

Because there is a lack of clarity of which schools and which students will be a part of the grant, as well as how it will be rolled out, this is not at the highest of quality.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District does a very good job in providing a high-quality plan in describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. As mentioned earlier, the District will use a staged implementation approach allowing for growth and learning as the expansion continues. This is very well thought out and creates a system of smart-growth. The District Design and Implementation Team (DDIT) will be collectively responsible for the "fidelity" with which the proposal is executed. The District provides a detailed timeline for this. Additionally, the over all structure of creating Platform schools to serve as incubators, which will then turn into a larger Strategy Cluster schools leading to the creation

of a Network of schools shows a cognitive understanding of expansion with results in mind. Throughout the implementation researchers and evaluators from the DDIT will support the growth through the use of data and professional development. Additionally, the District will be partnered with the National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools (NCSU) which will also help using the information from the Platform schools to expand into the Cluster schools. However, the specifically roles for who would fulfill them is lacking. As well as the goals and outcomes of the second tier of the schools is not robust.

This is a well throughout high quality plan for scaling up the reform effort in the District.

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

The District's vision articulates ambitions yet achievable annual goals in all the required areas.

A (4) (a) The District's goals on summative assessments are clear and thoughtful. All of them represent ambitious but achievable goals. Growth rates overall show an almost 100% rate, while some subgroups who are starting from lower levels are asked to grow more. The District is respectful to starting baseline numbers and does not blindly ask for growth that just fits an over all number

A (4) (b) The District's goals on decreasing achievement gaps are good. They are achievable and ambitious. Though the starting points are actually very close with only Asian students having over a double digit gap in terms of racial category, it is good to see the District holding itself to reducing the ELL gap by over 50% as well as the Economically disadvantaged group.

A (4) (c) The District already has an overall graduation rate of 76.3%, but it does create ambitious and achievable goals to push all of its numbers higher. Having a higher starting point actually makes growth harder, as there are less students to move toward graduation, but the District's goal of 88.2% is ambitious and if reached would be a great indication for all urban districts that high rates of graduation are possible.

A (4) (d) Again the District's numbers, this time for college enrollment are ambitious and achievable asking for the over all rate to reach 71.6% from 58.7%. To have almost a quarter of an urban school district's students enroll in college is a wonderful and ambitious goal.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District shows a clear record of success over the past four years in all three subcategories

B (1) (a) From 2010-2013 the District showed growth in reading, math, and science in the TCAP test for 3-8 graders as well as in 3rd and 7th grade exams. The District also showed steady percentage point gains in Math by subgroup. And through, the graduation rate in the district slipped from 2012-2013, that can be attributed to a change in the calculation of that rate. Since 2009, even with the change, the District has seen a 3.2% increase across all students. Special note should be made that Hispanic graduation rates have increased by over 10% during that time. However, the college enrollment figures have remained flat over the last four years.

B (1) (b) The District has implemented several reforms, especially in its low-performing schools. 20 schools were part of a major SIG grant, which was renewed each year for successful implementation and student outcomes. 85% of the schools "demonstrated significant improvements in student performance," with one even being recognized as a "Reward School" for being in the top 5% of the state in terms of growth on the TVAAS scores.

B (1) (c) The District uses the National Career Academy Coalition's 10 National Standards of Practice to "systematically and consistently monitor development and implementation of academies." Since these Academies are focused on personalized learning and college and career readiness, "stakeholder involvement in curriculum and instruction, mentoring, and teacher professional development" are critical. Though there is not a robust conversation of how the District will make student performance data accessible in this section it is mentioned in other sections. However the District does state that schools have an "advisory program; utilization of data conversations with students and creating personalized rewards; engagement of students in clubs related to educator and student interest, the targeting of at-risk students for intervention."

Because of the lack of clarity in addressing B (1) (c) this answer is lacking in some respect.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District articulates a clear and compelling response to its transparency with regard to processes, practices, and investments. The District has switched from a District centered approach to one where schools will be "provided exceptional levels of control, autonomy, and flexibility." The District is even piloting a "weighted student funding" method where monies will follow the student so that the students unique needs will be addressed. This is all in addition to the District providing the requested information in subcategories a-d. The District holds the information on-line, which is accessible to all. Additionally, school board reports and presentations are available for up to three years through the District's website.

The District has a high-level of transparency and is working to increase that level.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District is located in a State that has been at the forefront of education reform and implementation. The State and the Governor have committed repeatedly to focus on innovation, allowing for autonomy to implement personalized learning environments. Education Next highlighted the State for its rigorous standards and its move toward school success. The State is a member of PARCC. All of the State's pedagogical shifts in standards support the personalized learning environments the District advocated for. The State has even created teacher evaluations to be, in part, focused on individual student growth.

The State has been granted a waiver from USDOE so that it can focus on its own alternate accountability system which focuses on "growth for all students every year and closing achievement gaps." These systems then lead toward "increased autonomy" to adopt innovative approaches to education reform.

Also, the State has adopted language to allow for virtual schools. The District has a virtual school which allows for full-time and part-time students to meet the goals of the "personalized learning plans through flexible delivery of course content."

The District seems to have all the flexibility and autonomy to implement their personalized learning proposals.

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

15

15

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The District describes a thorough and exhaustive plan that it undertook to engage and gather support from stakeholders. Because the District fully believes that personalized learning environments are supported by people who are directly or tangentially impacting the students, the District made a strong effort to incorporate the voice and sentiment of many people throughout the District.

Stakeholders "contributed at every stage of developing the application." The list of people the District worked with is extensive: students, teachers, principals, central office staff, school board members, parents, early learning groups, the Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, philanthropic organizations, etc. etc. The list goes on and on. And the District shows meaningful engagement, not just a rubber stamp or an informational meeting. There was a webpage where stakeholders could submit ideas. Student focus groups effected the grant's understanding of how students "learned the best," specifically students' desire to be "engage by technology," and approaches teachers should take with students. The proposal's focus on mobile technology was a direct link to student focus groups. Even the conversation about students learning during group work as effected by the focus groups highlighting problematic maturity issues that made group work difficult.

Teachers' voice were incorporated in two major ways. One was through the Teacher Leadership Institute. These teachers helped to design ideal school structures. The proposal was shaped by these teachers ideas concerning autonomy around "staffing, schedules, and student engagement." The second group was organized in partnership with the local Education Association. The professional development parts of the proposal were greatly effected by their feedback, focusing on pd lead by national experts, available on-demand, and specific to teachers' subject area.

The parent focus group supported the proposal with their ideas of how to engage their children and how to facilitate ongoing communication to parents throughout the implementation process of the grant.

The District supplied almost 100 pages of letters of support.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

C (1) (a) (i) The Districts plan is strengthened by a "three-pronged focus around personalized learning: personalized supports, personalized relationships, and personalized approaches." Because of this, the entire proposal is based on the idea to "ensure students take ownership of their learning and connect learning to their life goals." Not only does each student annually update their individualized learning plans, but all participating students will "create a 10 year plan" during 8th grade.

C (1) (a) (ii) In the selected schools, students will collaborate to establish goals and "develop a map of their learning at the beginning of each year." Student will use modules, dashboards, and self-evaluations. The students will also be able to track and measure their own progress with the student-centric "Data Warehouse."

C (1) (a) (iii) The District has created a program that ground "classroom instruction in project-based learning." Students are "exposed to an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question or challenge." These PBLs can be self-guided and are of topics of interest of the student. The PBLs are vetted through coaches. This process will be expanded through Platform and Cluster schools.

C (1) (a) (iv) Students have access to a wide range of cultures and linguistic diversity within the District. However, students will also be working, through the PBLs, in groups informed by student diversity and interest. The District does not mention ideas/cultures/communities not represented in the District.

C (1) (a) (v) The District's proposal focuses on students being able to master critical content. The personalized supports that monitor progress help, as do specific formative assessments which allow teachers and students to assess personalized learning. The PBLs, as well as other high-quality formative assessments will make sure that students in the District are able to master critical content. However, the actual content is not mentioned.

C (1) (b) (i) The District with the use of IPLs will allow for students to have a personalized sequence of content. Student take ownership of their data and understand their progress through their portfolios. The District's Instructional Management System, integrates lesson plans, instructional content, and assessments for teachers to use for the individualization of the student curriculum. The content will be "based on each student's formative assessment results and ILPS."

C (1) (b) (ii) The District has a variety of high-quality instructional approaches, such as "learner-centered approaches" where the teacher serves as facilitator. The PBLs and Blended Learning Environments as well. The District will use "self-guided learning, small group learning, collaborative learning and digital learning."

C (1) (b) (iii) As mentioned before the District will use high-quality content, including digital learning content for to move students toward success. However, the District does not stipulate which ones, only that the District will vet them as they come to the District via parents, students, and educators.

C (1) (b) (iv) The District's use of the Data Warehouse allows for constant real-time feedback for students, families, and educators. The tracking, monitoring, and assessing will give all stakeholders information and feedback. Advisory programs will also support the personalized learning recommendations and provide frequent feedback for students based on students' academic, social, and emotional development.

C (1) (b) (v) Because of the robust data systems the District will know if students are on/off track for college and career readiness. These early warning tools are linked to the District's instructional management system and thus the District will assign an intervention team or specialist to support these students in real-time. However this is based on current needs and not mention of need category like ELL or SWD. This is actually pedagogically more sound as it is based on actual assessments, but it does miss those populations specifically.

C (1) (c) The District will support students in their understanding of the tools and resources continuously, since the entire program is based on the personalized tools and the students use of them. There will be student ambassador programs in both the middle and high schools. Additionally, teachers and other support people will instruct and guide the students to use and understand the tools.

However, holistically, the plan is not totally high-quality, because even though the key goals, activities, rationale, timeline,

etc. exists but they don't really explain the rationale for how they all fit together. There are pieces of great work, but how it will actually occur, how thing will work, specific numbers of who, what, and where for specific roles, numbers of teachers, students, etc. are missing.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C (2) (a) (i) The District has a comprehensive professional learning plan "based on networked learning communities sharing best practices and collaborating around problems of practice." The proposal will strengthen this network among and between the Platform and Cluster schools. Specifically, with support of DDIT the community of practice will have plans that will lead toward "coaching teachers around accelerating learning in college and career readiness" and "forming smaller communities of practice within the broader COP based on common areas"

C (2) (a) (ii) The PD for the Platform and Cluster schools will focus on "identifying the academic needs of students." The PD focusing on PBLs will show how to adapt content for each learner. Additional help with PBLs will be from the Buck Institute for Education. The schools will also receive support in incorporating blended learning options which leads directly to the question

C (2) (a) (iii) Data coaches will support teachers in addressing this sections as well as PD in through PLCs. The DDIT will also support the teachers' use of data to inform the student progress. Training sessions in co-developing college and career goals, working with students to build their capacity to self-evaluate, ensure alignment of learning goals are all strategies the District will follow to address the needs of teachers in supporting students.

C (2) (a) (iv) The District will create ILPs for each educator, which will be co-developed by teachers, principals, and coach. They will include reviews of educators' ratings on each indicator of the evaluation rubric, written feedback from observations, goals for continuous improvement, specific strategies and actions steps to accomplish goals, educator-completed needs assessments on using data to inform instruction

C (2) (b) (i) The District's use of the ILP platform as well as TASEL and the use of the student dashboards by the teachers will all lend to teachers having actionable information to help them make better educational decisions for the students. Additionally, the teachers will have access to a "professional learning portal" which will have research based practices that are aligned to the evaluation indicators and CCSS

C (2) (b) (ii) Educators will have access to high quality learning resources. These resources will be review through a curriculum review process, including teams of teachers using CCSS. The rubric will evaluate the depth of the content as well as the inclusion of "instructional shifts required by the CCSS." The teachers are all able to create their own work that can then be vetted through this process. Again the professional learning portal will also give access to teachers to high-quality resources.

C (2) (b) (iii) The use of the multiple data systems and ILPs allow for teachers to have the tools to match student needs with resources and approaches.

C (2) (c) (i) The District has a robust data system including teacher evaluations and student assessments, both formative and summative, both digital and in class, which helps school leaders and school leadership teams asses the students and move them forward. Be it the ILP, the blended learning, school dashboard, or even the Skillful Observation and Coaching Laboratory, which builds instructional leadership capacity, the District has so many information systems that can be used to influence student success.

C (2) (c) (ii) The District will provide on-going training in all of the data systems as well as PD aforementioned

C (2) (d) The District has a high quality plan in increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. This is done through a strategy of recruitment, retaining, and training educators. The District will "clearly define" recruitment strategies, identify preparation programs and institution that feed high-quality candidates to the District, benchmark programs and districts with good recruitment programs, use school-specific and district wide data to analyze existing educator shortages, streamline application and communication processes. Additionally, through the District's Public Impact Opportunity Culture framework, highly effective teachers are working with teachers in the Districts highest needs schools. The District also mentioned it might use multi-classroom leadership and blended learning opportunities so more students can be taught by effective and highly effective teachers.

However, holistically, the plan is not totally high-quality, because even though the key goals, activities, rationale, timeline, etc. exists but they don't really explain the rationale for how they all fit together. There are pieces of great work, but how it will actually occur, how thing will work, specific numbers of who, what, and where for specific roles, numbers of teachers, students, etc. are missing.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D (1) (a) The District is organized in a way that provides support and serves all the schools to meet the implementation goals. Everything from the creation of the Central Office Effectiveness Transformational Leadership Group (COE TLG) which assess the "efficiency and quality of supports and processes provided by the central office, to the creating of the Office of Innovation, the District has tried to structure itself in a way to support personalized learning. The District is part of the Center for Reinventing Public Education Portfolio School District Network, it is part of a Gates initiative to support the design and implementation of a District/Charter Compact. And the long line of examples from previous sections of the Platform and Cluster schools to the data resources all tie together to create a District read to support personalized learning.</p> <p>D (1) (b) Since the school leadership teams have autonomy over the implementation of the master scheduling, course offerings, and class schedules, it fits part of the criteria. 83% of the schools in the proposal have autonomy over exception pay, intercession, and the use of extended learning time. The Platform and Cluster schools will be "granted additional autonomy over school calendar and bell schedule to accommodate their customized individualize learning plans." Hiring is a joint process where school leadership teams have the autonomy and flexibility to redefine roles and responsibilities within their schools, however are still beholden to some District level rules and regulations.</p> <p>D (1) (c) The District does not address this topic clearly. Though it states that students will be using mastery learning which allows for learning at different rates and allows for differentiated and personalized instruction, it does not say that students can earn credit based on mastery. Thus the implication is that seat time is still the coin of the realm.</p> <p>D (1) (d) Using Grading for Understanding, students are able to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. As the District states the "grading system is based on the principle that grades are not about what students earn but what students learn." This system allows for students to have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards.</p> <p>D (1) (e) The District uses Structured Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) to ensure that all students, particularly English learners, have access to the regular curriculum during classroom instruction. The District also just recently "implemented an inclusionary model for students with disabilities phased in by grade level across all schools." Inclusions facilitators help with this as well.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D (2) (a) The District provides access to the necessary content, tools, and other learning resources, through a "bold plan that harnesses the latest in 21st century technology, and a powerful network of public and private support." The Anytime Access for All initiative for the Platform and Cluster schools will ensure all students have access. Through the work of Connected Tennessee, the District will get Family and Community Engagement, Connected Community Adoption, Access, and Use Assessment, Connecting Students and Families to Improve Anytime Access and Student Outcomes, Drund -- License for Sustainability and Innovation, and Computer Skills for Advancing Parent Engagement. The District will be able to charge a very reduced rate for broadband access. Additionally, devices will also be available at a very reduced rate. Sadly, there is still a cost to the devices and the broadband access. The schools and district will have infrastructure to support personalized learning via technology through an enhanced broadband access. Additionally, all the families as well as the educators will have access to multiple platforms of digital content and resources. Because the District is still having families pay for the devices and access this is not truly ensuring that all families have access.</p> <p>D (2) (b) Students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have ample training opportunities through the partnership with Connected Nation and Connected TN, as well as from other partners. The Districts Informational Technology specialists will also provide onsite support to teachers and school staff. And as previously mentioned the District will get support in Family and Community Engagement, Connected Community Adoption, Access, and Use Assessment, Connecting Students and Families to Improve Anytime Access and Student Outcomes, Drund -- License for Sustainability and Innovation, and Computer Skills for Advancing Parent Engagement</p> <p>D (2) (c) The District has a series of 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, such as GradeSpeed adn</p>		

SchoolNet/StudentNet. This information can then be used in other electronic learning systems like College4TN.org.

D (2) (d) The data from the Districts systems is already readable through the system. With the grant the District is proposing to make it readable by "systems outside of the district, enabling" the District, "to collect information on students that addresses multiple domains and facilitates outcomes-oriented collaboration with community partners."

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District puts forth a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback. This plan includes an external evaluation consultant as well as multiple members of the Department of Research, Assessment, and Evaluation who will collaborate to "develop and implement a sustainable approach to monitoring and providing feedback." This team will work with the Platform and Cluster schools and the DDIT to develop implementation and monitoring blueprints. These will include "personalized learning strategy rubrics" to "advance a sustainable process with guidelines and tools to use in the post-grant stages." Stakeholders will be engaged throughout the process as well. The District will use a "Utilization-focused program evaluation" which will use strong formative feedback to "enhance organizational learning." The District goes as far as creating an entire "next generation" approach to evaluation which allows for learning and growing through the implementation of the program. As stated throughout this proposal the District will have a time line of feedback and discussion of implementation, short-term, and long-term outcomes are discussed. Every major piece of the proposal will be discussed by the stakeholders constantly and consistently throughout the implementation of the grant.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District has a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This is evidenced by their high-level of outreach and specific plans for communication such as: Student Ambassador Presentations, Parent Organization Presentations, Hard-copy and Electronic Newsletters, a Webpage, Facebook page, and Twitter feed, School and District Level department meetings, faculty meetings, leading and learning meetings, Parent University, Strategy Cluster Quarterly Forums, DDIT Quarterly Meetings, Monthly Alignment Nashville Committee Meetings, Quarterly Partnership Council Meetings, and Board of Education Meetings.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District uses the measures given in the grant outline, but ties them to the needs and understanding of the District, by allowing for teams to act on their "autonomy to contribute to the creation of metrics of how well students and adults are progressing towards project goals. Additionally, DDIT will support and further develop a focus on additional measures to ensure schools are truly meeting the needs of all involved.</p> <p>The entire program is built with rigorous, timely and formative data accumulation used to make adjust and retool all projects in the program and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. All of the aforementioned committees, groups, meetings, and new departments are tasked with looking at the current data and evaluating success and then figuring out how to move forward.</p> <p>The District's rationale for choosing the specific measures is mentioned, in another section but are all tied to state and district based goals and outcomes. This is very strong, using the grants measures, but tying them into local language and understanding.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Again, following the Districts overarching plan, the District's evaluation team will examine the District's performance on the "short and long term outcomes delineated as performance measures, with a focus on linking details of implementation quality and fidelity (using the personalized learning rubrics) to the outcomes." A further disaggregation of data will be done</p>		

by the team to see if subgroups are having different outcomes. The evaluation team will use "an interrupted time series analysis, case study of the six personalized learning strategies, and social network analysis of all schools, the strategy clusters, and engaged external partners," to gauge the effectiveness of the RTTT-D funds.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>F (1) (a) The District identifies all funds that will support the project</p> <p>F (1) (b) The District's budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. All of the programs mentioned in the proposal have budget lines that support the human capital/resources as well as the programmatic and equipment needs. Everything from the project coordination and evaluation to the platform and cluster school rollout are covered and supported in a reasonable way. Salaries are in line with expectation and the rolls noted, Project Director, Grant Specialist, Internal Evaluator, etc. are all in line with the proposal.</p> <p>F (1) (c) Though the rationale is not provided in this section, the rationale has been strong and cohesive throughout. The District does describe in detail the external funds as well as the grant monies. For instance, specific allocations from General Operating Funds, Title I, SIG, Title IIA, Teacher Incentive Fund, and other sources are mentioned to show exactly how the District will support implementation. But again, the rationale is not provided in this section and thus does not receive full, perfect credit.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District has a high quality plan for sustainability which uses the grant as one time investments that lead to capacity building and then support the projects through a scaling of effective practices across all district schools.</p> <p>The proposal advocated for a Central District Restructuring and School Flexibility. This will continue and be supported once the grant is over. Because of the "transformation of district resource allocation," the new structure will be able to be sustained once the grant monies run out. The Data Warehouse will be operational and its support can come from the continuing budget of the school district. The professional development and support given to the schools will not be lost once the grant is over. The Human Capital Reform can also continue because pilot schools will serve as models which other schools can learn from without major financial outlay. The Anytime Access program will leave the District and its schools with high functioning digital access and equipment. The partnership with Connected TN will continue as well. Additionally, the General Purpose Operating Fund Revenues have, even during the Recession, continued to expand. The Mayor is a firm supporter of the District and this has led to increased local fiscal support.</p> <p>The District articulates a vision that will allow for all of the programs to continue without the need for more grant monies. The District should be commended for thinking of all allocations as one-time investments that will not be needed after the grant runs out, in order for the program to continue.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The District provides a description of coherent and sustainable partnerships to support its plan. The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Alignment Nashville and the Pencil Foundation have become "instrumental partners in collaborative efforts to integrate external support into school-level practice and district-level policy." AN and OC have established a committee of Nashville-area top-level business leaders organized to advance improvements in education, six industry specific Partnership Councils, and almost "200 business and post-secondary school-level partners that work directly with students, teachers, and administrators to provide real-world, experiential opportunities." Along with business partners, the District has a model of community schools, Community Achieves, which brings community organization and</p>		

resources to help the District's students in health.

(2) The District provides population-level desired results for students in a variety of areas such as parent and family engagement, enrollment of parents in gradespeed, safe and supportive schools, meal participation of student eligible for free and reduced lunch, and mental health appropriate referrals and receipt of services, among others.

(3) (a) The District will track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children, using the "program manager" and the entire data platform of the District. The District can disaggregate certain cohorts as well. Using the Community Achieves program, the District is able to use the Program Manager to track indicators from across the district.

(b) Using this data, the District can then target its resources in order to improve results for participating students. Because the Data Warehouse is linked to the Program Managers, the partnerships can support the work. Additionally, the District has created "Cluster Support" which allows for the District to work with the Community Achieves organizations.

(c) With the "toolkit" described in the proposal the District has developed a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students. With the toolkit, AN and Community Achieves can scale the model out to additional school. Additionally, AN has begun to develop a "technology portal" to "facilitate collaborative project development and management" and "facilitate broad-based community and resources identification, engagement, accountability, and tracking."

(d) This will also lead to improved results over time. The design of the Community Achieves program is based on a "continuous improvement framework" and will get iterative feedback throughout the proposal.

(4) Again, the Community Achieve model would "integrate education and other services through the use of the Invitation to Participate process." Schools will identify specific needs of their students, schools, families, and community," identify outcomes they would like to achieve and then work together. The partnership AN and Community Achieve work together with information from the schools to support the students.

(5) The District will build capacity of staff by providing them with tools and supports. This is evidenced by the support provided by AN and Community Achieves. CA coordinators and teams support schools with needs assessments as well as professional development. AN and CA with the schools also engage the families, have created infrastructure and shared support mechanisms that solidify the partnerships role in the District.

(6) The District has identified its annual performance measures. They are ambitious yet achievable. Some measures are moving school climate, increasing meal participation. However, the District does not create performance measures for some of the goals.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The District does an incredible job in meeting this priority. Throughout this proposal the personalization of education of each and every student is forefront and paramount. From the blended learning opportunities, to the Platform schools model, the District seems to understand how to start with a good idea and then grow it smartly and strongly to reach many students. Community partners are used, parents and educators are listened to and appreciated. But most importantly, the individual needs of students, through a myriad of surveys, project-based learning opportunities, mentoring, is met. The students can move at their own pace and work in their own way. Mastery learning is embraced and the individual students seem to have a voice in their work product as well as in their instruction.

The only weakness in the proposal is not really knowing the actual instructional materials, but based on the strength of the proposal, the District should be trusted to make the right decision.

The District has made student success the focal point of the proposal and it looks like the program would lead toward real student success.

Total	210	186
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