



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0006GA-1 for Peach County School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District clearly articulates a comprehensive reform model that encompasses the four core academic areas. The district proposes ongoing improvements for all district schools through its development of the Professional Learning Environment Plan (PLEP) as a resource for all schools. For example, PCSD identified PLEP framework serves as the foundation to accomplish the districtwide focus on customized learning. Likewise, the district's emphasis on Georgia's Common Core Performance Standards (GCCPS), Statewide Longitudinal System (SLDS), Project-based learning and summer bridge program ensures student growth and success by allowing principals and teachers to track instructional improvements. The district documents the adoption of standards and assessments by implementing the Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics standards &amp; Literacy standards in the second year. Furthermore, effective teachers are retained in the district through participation in a three year induction plan and the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) designed to provide support to teachers year round. In addition, the district proposes a personalized learning environment with classroom experiences that encompass the use of data for continuous improvement and academic academies such as the Trojans 9<sup>th</sup> grade Career Exploration Academy, STEM Academy, and the College and Career Ready Academy and Summer Bridge Program. Finally, Increased Learning Time (ILT) also helps to ensure that the focus will be on the four educational core areas.</p> <p>However, the district does not clearly address its plan for turning around the lowest achieving schools nor how it will increase equity through its personalized student support environment. Therefore, based on the evidence provided, the district communicated a reform plan that is somewhat comprehensive.</p> <p>Overall, this Places PCSD in the lower high range.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District's innovative approach to implementation includes both the schools and the district as evidenced by the involvement of all schools in the district completing a student Performance Diagnostic. Likewise, the process for selection of schools is described along with a list of all participating schools and educators. This list also clearly identifies specific student groups by high needs and low-income populations as well as the number of participating students.</p> <p>Therefore, based on evidence presented, the district will have a high level of support both at the LEA and school level.</p> <p>Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper high range.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District's reform proposal targets personalized learning for all students in the district with the goal of having a significant impact on improving student outcomes. Through the PLEP model, all district grant schools will offer differentiated instructional strategies, increased learning times, standards based classroom instruction, project based learning, common planning, disaggregated data, balanced assessments, teacher advisors, use of technology and career awareness for elementary students as part of a unique blend of strategies and activities designed to promote a personalized learning environment. Thus, PCSD demonstrates this level of support to all schools through the participation</p>		

in the PLEP model. The plan includes goal, activities, responsible parties, and deliverables. However, the specific details of the timeline are not included only a range from 2014-2018. Likewise, there is no rationale for the included activities. Therefore, in the absence of a high quality plan, this district scores in the middle high range.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District notes goals that are ambitious by targeting improved student learning through incremental growth on assessments. For example, PCSD proposes growth on end of course assessments and statewide assessments of at least 13 % by the end of the grant period. Likewise, the district expects to narrow student achievement gaps by 1-3% each year until the end of the grant period. Similarly, goals for increasing the graduation rate are from 67% to 88% after the grant period ends. The district proposes to increase college enrollment rates from 72% to 81%. Since PCSD has a track record of increasing achievement and with the full implementation of the PLEP model and student individualized plans, these goals should be achievable.

Overall, this places PCSD in the upper middle range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District reports a varied record of success over the past four years. For example, PCSD details that on the Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) in English Language Arts, End of Course Test English 9 and Economics, the district exceeded state average. Likewise, the number of students exceeding the standard has increased consistently in the past four years. Additionally, the district continues to close student achievement gaps between Whites and Hispanics. For example, student achievement gaps narrowed in recent years in the areas of mathematics between these subgroups. In the past four years, students scored increased from 18.7% to 22.9%. Likewise, for students with disabilities, scores narrowed in the areas of math, reading, and science. However, the district does not provide evidence of a record of consistent success in improving the high school graduation rate. Likewise, it is unclear from the narrative as well as in the attached chart of the number of students who enroll in college. The district identifies PCHS as its Lowest Achieving School (LAS), showing significant improvement using the Transformation Model over the past few years. For example, the implementation of three themed academies, CCGPS in math and language arts, project-based learning, professional development (PLCs), 1:1 technology, and the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System and data driven decision making in instruction all attributed to significant reform at PCHS. Although, the district addresses specifically how data will be made available to teachers, students and parents in multiple ways to inform and improve instruction, it does not state how data will be made available to parents without internet resources.

Overall, this places PCSD in the upper middle range.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
---	----------	----------

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District provides consistent evidence that it currently practices transparency in processes, practices and investments. For example, personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and non-instructional staff, instructional staff only, teachers only,, and non-personnel expenditure are made available to the public through district, state, and governmental websites as well as local television stations and newspapers. Furthermore, expenditures are clearly provided in each of the following areas, regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. However, it is unclear if this information is available through an annual federal data collection process.

Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper high range.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District demonstrates evidence of autonomy under state guidelines to implement its approved grant proposal. For example, according to the proposal, the district has the autonomy to create, modify and implement operating procedures. Similarly, the district's proposal includes procedures for creating personalized learning environments and implementing a <i>Teachers as Advisors</i> program. However, there is no evidence of autonomy granted from a state agency other than Georgia eboard website information noted in the proposal.</p> <p>If the district utilizes the autonomy available with the ability to make adjustments to programs as needed, based on useful data, it is likely that the procedures will be successful or modified.</p> <p>Overall, this Places PCSD in the lower high range.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District reports clear evidence of stakeholder involvement in the proposed plan. For example, the district developed the reform model based on internal and external stakeholder involvement in a needs assessment including staff, parents, administrators, students and the community. However, it unclear of the specific involvement of students, families, teachers and principals other than through the completion of a survey with results indicating agreement with goals and strategies of the proposal with no changes recommended.</p> <p>Letters of support were included from many external stakeholders such as governmental officials, business owners, postsecondary and parent organizations. However, there are no letters of support from all participating principals, nor is it clear if principals participated in the initial survey of stakeholders. Likewise, it is also unclear if at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools are in support of the proposal.</p> <p>Overall, this Places PCSD in the lower high range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District proposes an exhaustive high quality plan designed to promote personalized learning through its state approved College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). According to the application, students will participate in Georgia's 2010 BRIDGE Act, with parent and educator support. This system is structured and designed for students in grades six through twelve to assist in reaching career goals through exploration of careers and postsecondary education options. Additionally, it is essential toward helping students improve graduation rates, preparedness for postsecondary education or careers, and consistently involving parents and students in the process. Although it appears that if implemented appropriately, the BRIDGE Act could result in improved graduation rates and preparedness for postsecondary education or careers, the district did not provide any specific evidence of success based on implementation of this Act. Also, all students will be engaged in creating an individual graduation plan as well as exposed to cultural diversity through various cultural activities as part of the personalized learning process.</p> <p>PCSD proposes a dynamic <i>Teacher as Advisors</i> program for students in elementary through high school to assist with career essential skills. Likewise, the Teacher as Advisors program if implemented appropriately, could result in improved preparedness for careers, however the district did not provide any specific evidence of the success of this program.</p> <p>PCSD notes the effective implementation of Georgia's (LDS) to ensure a personalized learning environment for every student in grades k-12 by providing a comprehensive data warehousing of student assessment scores and growth as well as electronic instructional resources tailored for each student. Additionally, the district's tracking sheet helps students manage and track their learning throughout the grade school experience.</p> <p>Although, the district addressed generally some areas in this section of the proposal, it is unclear of how students will be involved in deeper learning experiences other than having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and</p>		

perspectives through participation in Heritage Week activities. Likewise, there is little or no evidence of high quality instructional approaches and environments, high quality strategies for high-need students or mechanisms to provide training and support for students.

Finally, the district does include in its PLEP, a high quality plan with goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

Therefore, the district scores in the mid middle range for this area.

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

**20**

**15**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District identifies a clear plan for improving teaching and learning through a personalized learning approach. For example, the district reports that teachers will participate in ongoing monthly collaborative meetings. This includes working with an Instructional Facilitator weekly and monthly on curriculum development. Likewise, students will have multiple opportunities for a variety of learning approaches including the use of digital resources such as netbooks, interactive boards, Kindle Fires, technology equipment and software.

However, there is no indication of how the district will adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, measure student progress towards meeting college and career ready standards or use data to inform progress or improvement in student outcomes. The district will use the proven teacher and administrator evaluator system of effectiveness currently in use by the state. The Teacher and Leader Key effectiveness system includes components for teachers and leaders to provide continuous school improvement upon assessment thus assisting them in identifying optimal learning approaches for students. For example, the continuous improvement model mandates a cyclical approach that includes ability assessment, action steps to improve educator effectiveness, school culture and climate through ongoing professional development. If utilized appropriately, this process could be an effective tool for educators.

Additionally, the district proposes to shape curriculum and instruction to a more personalized instructional delivery method for students by differentiating instruction. This strategy will help educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. As a result, professional development will be the target for this approach to teaching, that if retained and utilized by teachers could result in maximizing learning for all students.

Furthermore, the district will match student needs with specific resources by using processes and tools such as the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM). According to the district, these tools have already been instrumental in assisting teachers with designing more effective differentiated instructional lessons. In an effort to provide training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goal of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps, PCSD proposes the use of Instructional Facilitators as coaches and as well as the New Teacher Induction Plan that focuses on best classroom practices and mentoring for new teachers.

Finally, the district proposes an innovative plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from high quality teachers through partnerships with higher education institutions and the regional educational service center to provide academies and professional development for teachers. This also includes incentives such as monetary rewards for teachers who show continuity in increasing student achievement. Therefore, if these approaches are implemented appropriately, participating students and teachers should be able to meet all of the targeted college and career ready standards as described in the high-quality plan that includes timelines, rationales, deliverables, responsible parties and goals.

Therefore, this Places PCSD in the upper middle range.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District's infrastructure and policy are aligned to support continuous implementation of this project. The district office cabinet makeup provides the necessary structure to adequately support its schools. For instance, staff

members represent all areas from curriculum, technology, operations, human resources, professional development, student services, grants and administrative services, and finances. Additionally, school leadership teams (Better Seeking Teams for elementary and middle schools) and (Diamond Team for high school) have the autonomy to plan for improved student achievement. Schools are given the flexibility to develop calendars and schedules, hire personnel, prepare budgets, and organize instruction.

Likewise, students benefit from similar flexible options such as mastery of standards at the high school level by completing a Credit Recovery Course and Project based learning opportunities in other grades. Both of the options above allow students multiple opportunities to attain mastery.

Also, current PCSD students have the opportunity for Increased Learning Time (ILT). Finally, Curriculum Facilitators, Parent Coordinators, and ESOL Teachers will ensure that learning resources and instructional practices are accessible to all parents and students by providing a knowledge base of resources to the community, parents and students.

However, it is unclear how the needs of students with disabilities will be addressed or what additional support will be provided to students who are limited english proficient. Additionally, the applicant includes responsible parties and a limited timeline but there is no evidence of deliverables, rationales, and goals as required components of a high quality plan. Otherwise, it is highly likely that these measures will be effective if practices included in this proposal are implemented.

Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper high range.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District demonstrates its record of support for a personalized learning environment throughout the district. For example, all parents and students, regardless of income, have access to a Parent Resource Center with learning resources such as a computer. In addition, parents will also have access to the Parent Portal, Edmodo, and Edgenuity Parent Portal as needed. However, for some parents, without internet access at home, it is unclear how these parents will receive necessary content, tools, and other learning resources. Students will have access to a variety of instructional strategies and a one to one computer initiative at the high school level.

PCSD provides a variety of technical support to ensure that the support is accessible for all stakeholders including a network engineer, instructional technology specialist, peer support of local school office, curriculum facilitator, and Georgia Department of Education representative to ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate support. For example, parents may refer to the local school office for assistance with the Parent Portal and Edgenuity online course or individual teachers for support with Edmodo, and by emails on the local school website for appropriate personnel assistance.

Additionally, the district utilizes multiple technology systems that allow parents and students to use data in an open format. For example, Study Island, Edgenuity, Renaissance Learning and GA Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills all result in data collection mechanisms too measure student growth. Furthermore, PCSD has a software based data warehouse system that integrates multiple data sources for district use such as the Infinite Campus system, the Georgia's SLDS, and the CSI Accounting system. However, this data system is not interoperable.

Finally, the district does include a high quality plan including goals, rationale for activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties as required, therefore, the overall score for PCSD is in the upper middle range.

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District utilizes a proven step by step process as a framework for continuous improvement because the cycle occurs multiple times throughout the entire school year. For example, the improvement model used by the district is a 14-step process for providing timely and regular feedback by analyzing data, identifying a goal, developing action steps and strategies, implementing the plan, assessing the results and modifying instruction based on the results. Likewise, the examination and analysis of student data allows the district to provide additional systems of support such as

professional development for staff designed to improve teaching strategies and methods of instruction. The fact that the improvement process can be modified as necessary suggests that if utilized appropriately, this method can be effective. PCSD indicates that it will report the results of student and teacher data to other publics at least annually at board meetings and on the website. However, it is unclear how the district plans to publicly share information on the quality of professional development under the grant nor how it plans to provide feedback after the grant period ends.

Finally, the district includes responsible parties, goals, rationales, deliverables, and a limited timeline.

Therefore, this Places PCSD in the low high range.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
---	----------	----------

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District offers a comprehensive approach to providing meaningful communication. For example, the district has community engagement committee members, one per board district are responsible for providing input and dispersing information throughout the district. Focus groups and open forums provide an avenue to obtain input on district initiatives and serve as a mechanism to facilitate communication with stakeholders and the community. PCSD also provides stakeholder engagement by providing ongoing communication including updating the district’s website and scheduling open forums and parent workshops. Finally, within the district, employees receive correspondence through an electronic mailbox. All of these methods of communication suggest that PCSD thoroughly participates in engaging internal and external stakeholders.

Finally, the district includes a high quality plan including all required components for ongoing communication and engagement, therefore, PCSD scores in the upper high range.

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
---	----------	----------

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District shows a commitment to implementing a personalized learning environment with 14 ambitious and achievable performance measures organized by subgroup. The district ensures that all students will have a highly effective teacher and principal and meet student specific checkups. For instance, all teachers and principals must participate in the TKES and LKES effectiveness evaluation system with an overall target of exemplary or proficient by the end of the grant period.

Likewise, if students are proficient at math in grades K through 8, on EOCT Algebra, on statewide assessments, have 10 or fewer absences, participates in at least two career awareness lessons, have adequate financial resources for college, completes graduation plan, participates in increased learning time, reading on grade level, and on track for college and career readiness, they have a greater likelihood of successfully becoming college and career ready by the end of the high school years.

The district proposes that the performance measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan. For example, PCSD will provide data that will be used to fully develop personalized learning plans based on what students have learned, identified areas of need, and plan differentiated instruction to ensure that all students learn. Administrators and teachers will analyze the data and apply this information in the classroom.

PCSD provides a clear rationale for selecting each of its performance measures and a detailed description of how it will review and improve the measure over time. For example, In order for teachers and principals to lead the work on personalized learning, they must be effective at choosing and ensuring that effective research proven strategies are use to promote student achievement.

Therefore, all performance measures when implemented properly ensure success towards continuous improvement. For instance, performance measures will be continuously reviewed by school level teams and administrators to determine degree of success and additional strategies that may be needed for continued success.

Overall, PCSD scores in the upper high range.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
--	----------	----------

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District plans a multi- faceted approach to evaluation designed to assess the effectiveness of the

grant program. For example, the district will distribute evaluation forms to professional development participants. As a result of the survey participation, each participant develops an action statement that results in implementation at the classroom level. Georgia's School Keys will be used to measure performance standards. The School Keys has eight strands and each strand includes performance standards. The performance standards are scored by rubric on four performance levels, exemplary, operational, emerging, and not evident. Therefore, these performance levels provide a road map for district staff to evaluate all professional learning activities included in the plan. Finally, the effectiveness of activities that employ technology will be determined by periodic observations, reviews of survey results, and technology usage reports. The compilation of the technology review data should provide sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of its use toward improving success for students.

Finally, the plan includes goals, timelines, deliverables, rationales, and responsible parties as part of its PLEP, therefore, PCSD scores in the upper high range.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District clearly articulates in a narrative format, all funds that are available to support the grant project and are sufficient to implement the grant such as the RTTD, local, state, Title I-A and C, Title II, Title III, and Title VIB. However, it is unclear of the total revenue from each of these additional sources. In fact, this column is not completed on the budget grid.</p> <p>Likewise, the approximate per pupil expenditure per year appears reasonable based on the amount of funds requested and the number of students expected to be served by the grant.</p> <p>Finally, funds that may be needed for ongoing operational cost versus funds for one time investments after the grant period ends are not clearly identified in the proposal.</p> <p>Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper middle range.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Peach County School District shares a commitment for sustainability beyond the grant period.</p> <p>The district currently receives other local, state, and federal entitlement funds that will be used as financial support for the project and will continue the support beyond the grant period such as Title I, Title II-A, Title II-D, and IDEA funds. Although, it is unclear of the total revenue from each of these additional sources, based on the district's student population, federal entitlement funds allocations should provide sufficient support for sustainability.</p> <p>Likewise, entities such as the school board, collaborative partners, and local business will provide financial resources in the future. Although the district identified several potential supporters, there is no evidence of specific dollar value support per individual or entity beyond the grant period nor did the applicant include a post- grant budget. Furthermore, the district proposes to evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use the data to make informative decisions regarding future investments. For example, the district will analyze data from various sources including reports from various programs, usage reports, surveys from participants, and student achievement data to determine its effectiveness.</p> <p>Finally, the district includes goals, deliverables, rationales, responsible parties and limited timelines as evidence of a high quality plan. Therefore, this places PCSD in the how high range.</p> <p>Overall, this places PCSD in the low high range.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District is committed to providing a comprehensive schoolwide experiences for its students in the area of academics, health and emotions. This is evident in the partnership that it has formed with several organizations to provide educational, social and safety services for its students. For example, Delta Sigma Theta and the AAUW partnerships provide *Reading is Fundamental* intervention program with success being measured by the CRCT. Similarly, Fort Valley State University partners with the district to provide the *Near Peer Grant* program that will measure success through the district's EOCT. This grant provides college students as mentors for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Multiple physicians provide free or reduced cost medical services while Peach County Sheriff's Department provides SROs.

PCSD's focus on establishing partnerships with the goal of targeted student outcomes such as students being present in the classroom, reading on grade level, having a safe and supportive environment, community partnership support, recipients of GED or high school diploma, a personalized learning experience and on track for college and/or career ready, should result in successful outcomes for students.

Additionally, the district provides family support through the formation of a three way partnership that offers monthly meetings, dinner and resources for Grandparents and Parents (GAP) participating in the program. Also, parent support is available through the WATCH Dogs, mentoring programs for fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father figures.

Likewise, parent can be engaged in decision making in the district through initiatives included in the Parental Involvement Plan. Therefore, the district continuously involves parents in multiple ways.

PCSD describes its continuous improvement process as a mechanism to improve results. However, details are not clearly described regarding improvement of results over time. Furthermore, the proposal does not address how this model can be replicated for use in other districts over time.

The district vaguely addresses all of the components in this section. Likewise, it does not state how the partnership will address particular student needs and services. In fact, there is no response included in some sections in this part of the application.

Finally, it is unclear how the partnerships will build capacity in district staff. However, the district does clearly identify its performance measures and desired outcomes for students as a result of stated partnerships.

Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper middle range.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Peach County School District clearly articulates a comprehensive reform model that encompasses the four core academic areas. The district proposes ongoing improvements for all district schools through its development of the Professional Learning Environment Plan (PLEP) as a resource for all schools. For example, PCSD identified PLEP framework serves as the foundation to accomplish the districtwide focus on customized learning. Likewise, the district's emphasis on Georgia's Common Core Performance Standards (GCCPS), Statewide Longitudinal System (SLDS), Project-based learning and summer bridge program ensures student growth and success by allowing principals and teachers to track instructional improvements. The district documents the adoption of standards and assessments by implementing the Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics standards & Literacy standards in the second year. Finally, increased learning opportunities help to ensure that the focus will be on the four educational core areas.

The reform proposal targets personalized learning for all students in the district with the goal of having a significant impact on improving student outcomes. Through the PLEP model, all schools will offer differentiated instructional strategies, increased learning times, standards based classroom instruction, project based learning, common planning, disaggregated data, balanced assessments, teacher advisors, use of technology and career awareness for elementary students as part of a unique blend of strategies and activities designed to promote a personalized learning environment.

The district will use the teacher and administrator evaluator system of effectiveness currently in use by the state. The current Leader Key and Teacher Key Effectiveness system includes components for leaders and teachers to provide continuous school improvement upon assessment. Furthermore, effective teachers are retained in the district through participation in a three year induction plan designed to provide support to teachers year round.

Overall, this Places PCSD in the upper high range.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>165</b>
--------------	------------	------------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0006GA-2 for Peach County School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

In Section (A)(1) the applicant offers a vision to develop and refine personal learning environments by a guide/resource called the Professional Learning Environment Plan (PLEP). Goal 1 of the PLEP indicates that teachers will get professional development to focus on the relationship between Differentiated Instruction and RTI to "personalize learning environments" but it remains unclear what the classroom experience will like for students and teachers and how the district will define personalized learning environments. Other goals of the PLEP are addressed within the applicable section comments.

**Strengths:**

- The narrative of this section outlines the Georgia Statewide Longitudinal System as the district's current data system and offers evidence as to how all admin., teachers, and support staff are trained in using the data for data-driven decision making.
- The district is in it's second year of Common Core implementation, which is a strength of the section; however, there is a lack of convincing evidence that implementation of the standards will "...ensure that all students are provided with personalized learning environments." without more specificity of what the classroom experience will be and how the district defines personalized learning environments.
- The district has reformed their high school structure to reflect an academy approach demonstrating a willingness to address career interests and individual career goals of students.

**Weaknesses:** The section did not offer clear and compelling evidence concerning the vision for the future in each of the four core areas will be. A precise vision for what the district hopes to accomplish within the four core areas rather than "continuing the district's work through enhanced personalized learning environments" would have made a more compelling argument for funding. With a stronger and more detailed vision, the other sections could serve as evidence to support that vision. For example, one ongoing initiative described in the section is differentiated instruction--a broad term that can be interpreted in various ways. It is unclear what aspect of differentiated instruction is going to be scaled up to create personal learning environments.

The section is scored within the middle range due to the lack of robust description of what the increased capacities for equity and project based learning will be. An examination of the intersection between Differentiated Instruction and RTI are mentioned without a detailed description about how each is/will be used to scale up personal learning environments or how 1:1 technology expansion to lower grades is related to differentiated instruction, RTI, or project based learning. A detailed description of how the district defines personalized learning environments would have make a much more clear and credible approach.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (A)(2)(a-c) the applicant provided data and data analysis of how schools identify specific student achievement gaps.

Strengths:

- District schools are listed and meet grant eligibility requirements of 2,000 students, and a 40% free/reduced lunch. Actual data shows the total number of students at 3,774, with 74.89% of the district students participating in free/reduced lunch indicating high need.
- Applicant provides total number of participating students, including low-income and high need, and participating educators.
- Current methodology was given for determining growth (e.g....., value-added, mean growth percentile, change in achievement levels).

Weaknesses: It remains unclear if all schools that met grant eligibility requirements were automatically allowed to participate or other criteria was used to select participating schools.

This section scores in the high range due the evidence presented and achievement gaps determined by analyzing highest achievement subgroups and lowest achieving subgroups. The charts were clear, straightforward, and data analysis and use in school improvement cycle was evident in the narrative provided.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

This section (A)(3) offered a bulleted list of current strategies available future key goals for scale up and meaningful reform.

Strengths: The strengths of this section lie in the key goals to increase student achievement.

- Teachers will receive PD on the relationship between differentiated instruction and RTI
- Train teachers to gather analyze and use data to measure progress and inform instructional practice. The Performance Target for this goal diminished it's strength. "Every teacher will participant in ongoing collaborative meetings..." was not very compelling, but closer examination of the chart showed strong outcomes (ESEA performance targets).
- Prepare students to be post-elementary, post-middle, and post-high school ready through personalized learning environments.
- Expand project-based learning at middle and elementary levels.
- Attain full implementation of project-based learning essentials to elementary schools
- Train students to effectively use technology resources for self- directed online learning.

Weaknesses: The applicant uses phrases such as "expand project-based learning" but change theory evidence and a description of how the reform will support district-wide change beyond the participating schools was unconvincing. It remains unclear how these key goals can be scaled up at each grade level and what the catalyst for that shift will be. The narrative uses the term "cornerstone of this plan" when describing the terms differentiated instruction and personalized learning environments for all students, and sends the reader to the appendix, for goals and targets.

This section scores in the high range. The district has a list of key goals for developing personalized learning environments, and describes how the reform will be expanded to other participating schools and will help the applicant reach it's outcome goals. The PLEP evidence supports a high quality plan that: includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (A)(4) offers detailed and robust charts to support ambitious yet achievable annual goals.

Strengths:

- The applicant identifies performance on summative assessments, targets for closing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment.
- Each aspect of (A)(4)(a-d) has evidence provided on the accompanying chart.
- The applicant goes beyond having subgroups move up towards white student goals, and sets targets for all

students.

- Goals appear to be ambitious, perhaps too ambitious for some subgroups. (see below for concerns about achievable)

**Weaknesses:**

- it would be helpful if the applicant could provide a more robust description of how student learning will be improved and an increase in equity will occur.
- (a) The goals for increases in summative assessments are ambitious--a 30% jump in achievement from students with disabilities and EL's in 9th grade doubling their scores in one year. It was unclear why some student groups had more modest gain expectations and others had large achievement goals to meet.
- (b) It was unclear why some goals for decreasing achievement gaps were selected for 3% decreases and others 2% or 1%. (c) There seemed to be some inconsistencies in graduation rates. 100% of English Learners graduating would go against all national trends. Since your 2012-13 data has not been released, a 100% goal for ELs in high school seems unrealistic when Hispanics percentage is 80%. Some narration to go with these charts describing the extent to which improved student learning and performance as well as increased equity would have made the data much more meaningful. It was difficult to determine the rationale behind the targets.
- (c) no noted weakness
- (d) College enrollment rates were projected at 2% growth each year but there was no rationale as to why that number was determined or if it was achievable.

The vision will result in improved student learning and performance, however, the goals set would have been much more compelling with an accompanying rationale, therefore the section scores in the middle range. Inconsistent targets within subgroups also contributed to the score.

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

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

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (B)(1)(a) offers data sets to highlight district accomplishments and demonstrate advancing academic achievement.

**Strengths:**

- Section (B)(1)(a) highlights the district's overall success on the CRCT assessment, including closing the gap between White and Hispanic students, number of Hispanic students exceeding on the Math CRCT, and students with disabilities improving in all core areas.
- Section (B)(1)(b) offers evidence of reform in it's lowest achieving school by utilizing an academy approach last year as well as implementing project-based learning.

**Weaknesses:** What remains unclear is how the academy approach increased equity, is increasing graduation rates or is increasing college enrollment. The high school is currently implementing the CCGPS, research based strategies such as project based learning, and a 1:1 technology initiative. Both strategies would have been more compelling had links to increased equity been established. In Section (B)(1)(c) there is ample description of various mechanisms to make student performance data available to all district stakeholders. What remains lacking are explicit details concerning how these mechanisms improve parent participation. Information is made available through various technologies but it is unclear if the mechanism is equitable and available for all parents and guardians.

The section scores in the middle range due to a lack of convincing evidence that meaningful reforms are increasing high school graduation rates and college enrollment. The section did not make it clear as to how student performance or discipline data on Infinite Campus can be relayed to low income parents who might not have access to technology.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
---	----------	----------

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (B)(2)(a-d) offers information concerning district budget transparency.

**Strengths:**

- The applicant offers evidence of a high desire to offer district budget transparency in the expenditures of the district and describes numerous avenues for information dissemination available to community stakeholders.
- Required salary reports are all accounted for as required in the application categories, school-level instructional and support staff, instructional staff only, and teachers only. as well as
- Parents are incorporated into the decision-making process of the budgets.

Weaknesses:

- The section directed the reviewer to the Appendix for actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level, but the information was not found in the Appendix of the application.
- It was unclear what expenditures were for regular K-12 instruction, pupil support, and school administration.

This section scores in the middle range due to a lack of clear evidence of expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, pupil support, and school administration. There were some figures with codes but it remain unclear to what the budget amounts aligned

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

**10**

**9**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (B)(3) offers strong evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the operating procedures as described in the proposal. The highlighted policies are aligned with Georgia State Code and Georgia State Board policies.

Strengths: Flexibility is a strength of the applicant as evidenced by an administrative handbook that is updated monthly. A strong section of the application, Peach County district offers details of their autonomy to create and implement operating procedures which are aligned to current practices and programs.

Weaknesses: The applicant does not make clear how they will ensure that operating procedures will be successful.

The section scores in the high range due to the compelling evidence of the state context for implementation.

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

**15**

**11**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (B)(4)(a) describes various ways stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal through surveys and meetings.

Strengths:

- 95 community members were polled to come up with 95.8% support of the application.
- Letters of the community and IHE stakeholders are present. (Literacy Education for Adults in Peach, Vice President for HR of BlueBird, District Stakeholders, Community Members, Parents).

Weaknesses:

- A weakness of the section is the lack of meaningful exchange of ideas with the teachers. Including teachers in the development of the application via e-mail seemed to be a less meaningful exchange than it could have been. Teachers were given an overview of the RT3 District Grant goals and strategies through an e-mail that also contained a survey. The nature of e-mail correspondence rather than face-to-face dialog and discussion would be a weakness of this section. Even a virtual face-to-face exchange and dialog would seemingly have been better than an e-mailed description and survey.
- It was unclear how students, families, and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal.
- It remains somewhat unconvincing that a strong contingency of community stakeholders support the project without a higher number of letters of support.

This section of the proposal scores in the middle range in meeting all application requirements for this section due to a lack of compelling evidence that ALL stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal, particularly principals, students, and parents.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Section (C)(1) offers an overview of the current climate for teaching and learning in Peach County School District.

Strengths:

- The section articulates standards-based pathway for students in the district to experience a high quality preparation for college and career readiness. Examples of this pathway include: A new accountability system in the College and Career Readiness Performance Index, CCSS implementation, annual professional development and increased technology.

Weaknesses:

- The section would have been stronger if any subpoint (C)(1)(a)(i-v), (b)(i-v), and (c) would have been individually addressed. While the PLEP was a detailed chart, it was not clear which section of the PLEP addressed the individual subpoints of the section (C)(1). Without more details of how the applicant will address each and every subpoint, the reader is left to go back through the PLEP and try to determine which aspects of the PLEP align with the application subpoints.
- Rather than highlighting a strong ESL program model, the applicant offers that each school has "access" to an ESL teacher.
- Goal 6 of the PLEP addresses training students to effectively utilize available technology resources to promote "self-directed" learning, but it remains unclear how students can achieve college and career readiness if they are being self-directed. Furthermore, there remains little convincing evidence of how the technology will be utilized to provide an equitable learning environment.
- One of the outcomes of Goal 6 of the PLEP is an "increase in instructional technology use" but it lacks a link between use and achievement.
- Goal 7 of the PLEP addresses training parents and stakeholders to understand "personal learning environments" but it still remains unclear as to how the district defines that term.

The section scores in the medium range because the PLEP offers no indication that any funds used for professional development will be utilized for experts in personal learning environments. The PLEP does indicate that there will be professional development for teachers to understand the relationship between differentiated instruction, and RTI. However, there is a lack of a compelling argument that this PD will correlate to personalized learning environments for the students within the RTT standards of a high-quality plan.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
--	-----------	-----------

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

This section highlights ongoing efforts of Peach County to prepare students for college and career readiness.

Strengths: The section narrative described current conditions of teacher effectiveness: monthly collaborative meetings to plan differentiated lessons, data analysis to make instructional adjustments, and personalization of instructional delivery to maximize learning for all students. The applicant indicated a district infrastructure that is designed for teachers to have access to optimal learning approaches, and high quality digital resources for high school teachers. The highlighted need for this section was increased availability of technology for elementary and middle schools.

Weaknesses: The applicant did not address the subpoints section (C)(2). Instead, the applicant provided a narrative in which the reader is required to decide which sections of the narrative fit the sub-parts of the section. While the narrative highlights positive aspects of teaching and learning in Peach County, the section would have been stronger if the narrative addressed/aligned with the structure of the application. Reading through the narrative in this section, it was unclear how different parts of the described teaching and learning in the district matched with the specific components of the application. The goals, targets, actions, and strategies described in the PLEP were realistic, however, they lacked detail and did not align with the structure of the subheadings in the application which made it problematic in determining capacities for meeting college and career ready standards and college and career-ready graduation requirements.

This section scores in the medium range. There is evidence of teachers having access to tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress towards meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. Evidence of providing

opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches could have been stronger. The plan is high quality for the most part, as it include key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, However the timeline is somewhat problematic in that aspects of it were unclear. The deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities were also in place but it was not always clear how the district would measure every aspect of progress.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Section (D)(1) returns to an alignment with the application subsections, making it much easier to correlate what is proposed to what is required in the application.</p> <p>Strengths: The narrative offers evidence of student progress based on demonstrated mastery, and LEA policy and infrastructure are strong. There is a detailed organizational chart and an emphasis on fidelity of curriculum implementation throughout the district. This section of application provides a detailed list of the chain-of-command and their assigned duties in the district.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Section (D)(1)(a) of the application provides a detailed list of the chain-of-command and their assigned duties in the district. However, it is unclear as to the level of autonomy the school leadership teams actually have. The application does not articulate who oversees ESL students or other student diversity (besides special education). Since a key aspect of the application is differentiated instruction and RTI, it could be assumed that ESL falls under the category of student support, but it remains unclear. Also unclear is how the different aspects of the district personnel team will support the project implementation. In Section (D)(1)(e) the narrative emphasized a "push-in" model but it was unclear if the students being pushed in were students with disabilities, English learners, or other subgroups. The applicant does not make it clear as to the possibility of students having opportunity to demonstrate mastery multiple times.</p> <p>This section scores in the medium range because it lacks a compelling argument that district policy and infrastructure offers administrative leadership and continuous instructional support to provide K-12 students a high-quality plan per RTT standards with resources and instructional practices available for all.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The narrative for this section directs the reader back to section (C2) "for specifics of the proposed personalized learning plan" which was somewhat of a detour from the section structure.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant highlights the district's efforts to promote personalized learning by describing comprehensive policies and infrastructure with support and resources such as Parent Portal, Edmodo, Edgenuity, and online resources such as Study Island, USA Test Prep, and IXL.</li> <li>• Technical support for parents and other stakeholders include school office personnel, teachers, and links to contact district and school webmasters, and technical support via the Georgia Department of education. Instructional technology specialists and parent coordinators also offer technical assistance workshops for parents and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant provides descriptions of technical support and the procedures for obtaining technical support on each data resource (though each resource may require a different point of contact for troubleshooting).</p> <p>Weaknesses: The section does not make clear if the current data allow for parents/students to export information in an open data format. It remains unclear if the system is interoperable.</p> <p>This section scores in the middle range because, while the district does make technology available for a guardian to use at school, it is unclear if the district is making a technology device checkout available to students and their guardians after hours. The applicant does mention that parents may use computers located in the public libraries, however, libraries are not accessible after hours when many parents need to gain access student information. There seems to be an overlap of</p>		

services provided by Infinite Campus, Parent Portal, Edmodo, and My Big Campus and a lack of inter operable access, requiring parents to call a different place for technical assistance specific to each of the systems. The way the section read made it seem that a low income guardian who needed to check their students' grades after hours might not be able to do so, and if they were able to make it to the library, they would be forced to navigate several different systems, depending on which school their various children might attend. The section would have been more compelling if the applicant would have described plans for a more inter- operable data system that was accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of income or time of day.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

### (E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In Section (E)(1) the applicant provides information about a foundational plan that includes details for a cycle of implementation and monitoring, data collection, analysis, and feedback.

#### Strengths:

- Monthly Grant Director visits offer a format for reciprocal data/information exchange.
- State monitoring visits provide feedback on state initiative progress.
- Dissemination of information on progress monitoring is provided through district, school, and civic organizational channels.
- Teachers monitoring student engagement and learning through instructional and assessment data collection, analysis, and feedback.
- Teachers setting building, grade level and content based performance goals.
- Surveys, evaluations, and classroom observations through critical friends/peer evaluation as well as classroom walkthroughs.
- Students setting individual performance goals and monitoring progress as well as self-monitoring of graduation progress.

Weaknesses: A major portion of the proposal is increasing 1:1 technology in the elementary and middle schools, however, it was unclear how the applicant plans multiple measures for measuring the implementation and goals for technology for individual students. Examples of evaluation measures could include level of Internet access, students knowledge of technology and teachers' ability to integrate technology into classroom instruction. Information dissemination was mentioned but no plan for calculating parent use of various portals or how the district would measure increased stakeholder use of scaled up technology.

This section scores in the middle range because of the aforementioned weaknesses as well as a lack of clarity on how the district will continue to monitor improvement after the term of the grant. The section does not offer a compelling evidence of a high-quality plan as required by RTT standards.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
---	----------	----------

### (E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In Section (E)(2) the applicant provides a framework for communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This applicant offers multiple modalities of contact that range from technology and telephones to sending newsletters home.

#### Strengths:

- The district utilizes various opportunities for communication including "call outs, memos, community engagement meetings, stakeholders meetings, study sessions and board meetings."
- Systems for dissemination include Parent community Liaison, Community Engagement Committee, school level parent coordinators, and administrators working with parents, staff, and community members.
- Ongoing strategies for communication include: Focus groups, school based parent liaisons, parent workshops, open houses, curriculum nights, electronic mailboxes, automated phone call outs, and school based student/family dissemination of information.

Weaknesses: The plan does not qualify as a high-quality plan according to RTT standards. The plan does not include timelines. While the plan does give information such as, "timely", it is unclear what the timeline, and parties responsible are for each of the performance measures.

This section scores in the middle range due to a lack of a high quality plan according to RTT standards.

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
---	----------	----------

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

In Section (E)(1) the applicant is lacking a high quality plan for all aspects of the performance measures.

Strengths:

- Goal 3, percentage of participating students by subgroup with 10 or less absences. Data collected in Infinite Campus has a research-based rationale (Dekalb, 1999).
- Goal 9, percent and # of students in grades 1-5 participating in at least two career awareness lessons. This is a state initiative, and offers exposure to 17 career clusters through social studies teachers. (This goal would have been stronger if it had been made clear that a scope and sequence of career awareness was in place for grades 1-5.)

Weaknesses:

Examples of deficiencies include:

- Performance measures 1 and 2 are identical (repeated).
- For goal 4, percentage of Kindergarten students gaining proficiency or better in mathematics on the GKIDS report, no intervention is mentioned besides "personalized learning plans", which has yet to be defined in the application other than professional development to determine the intersection between Differentiated Instruction and RTI. The applicant states that "Through the use of personalized learning plans, we will more easily be able to assess strengths and weaknesses..." but the specifics of the professional learning plans are not given. The argument for this measure would have been more compelling by articulating how a personalized learning plan could be used as an assessment.
- Goals 4-6 are all identical (repeated) which does not portray a convincing approach based on individual grade level or individualized action meeting student needs.
- Goal 7 provides a rationale for tracking the number and percentage of students on track to graduate, but does not include it's proposed theory of action regarding areas of concern.
- Goal 13 relies on an End of Course Test (EOCT) to determine the number and percentage of 9-12 student attaining proficiency or better in Algebra. This goal is unconvincing as a timely and formative assessment as the results are unavailable until the end of the course and too late to address areas of concern.

This section scores in the middle range because of the problematic aspects mentioned in the bullets listed above. The applicant lacks compelling evidence of a high-quality plan due to a lack of clarity if performance measures contain distinct timelines. Measures were not always clearly articulated as to who the responsible parties would be.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
--	----------	----------

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of proposed activities.

Strengths:

- The applicant provides a thorough and detailed approach for continuous improvement.
- Georgia School Keys provide strong guidelines for Professional Learning Strands.
- The applicant provides evidence of annual district and school use of a Comprehensive Needs Assessment to determine needs in every aspect of teaching and learning.
- Evidence listed in the District Continuous Improvement Plan under the column "Evaluation" includes: Lesson plans, classroom observations, walkthroughs, PL Evaluation forms, agendas, redelivery, RT3 Scope of Work, Analysis of teacher's use of assessment strategies, completed data reports, school data presentations, observations of school data rooms, industry certification status, RTI files, College and Career Readiness Performance Index, HR strategies checklist, principal and teacher evaluations, and various other artifacts and evidence.

The section scores in the high range due to a high quality plan for continuous improvement that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, deliverables, and implementation responsibilities.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>In Section (F)(1), the applicant begins the narrative of this section by stating that these funds will be used to supplement the initiative already in place and funded through local and state monies.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district offers a budget to support the development and implementation of the proposal.</li> <li>• A strength of the budget is funding for professional development of teachers and administrators.</li> <li>• The budget identifies one-time investment versus ongoing operational costs.</li> </ul> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (b)The budget table had some gaps in providing evidence that the buget was reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the appliant's proposal in that various items (e.g.curriculum and materials) did not have costs determined.</li> <li>• The applicant does not offer a rationale for sustainability of the Summer Bridge Program personnel and transportation after the project ends.</li> <li>• It is unclear how 1:1 technology can be sustained with no additional money for replacing broken/damaged technology, (e.g.. Kindle Fires) updates, Kindle Fire covers, lost technology, etc.</li> </ul> <p>This section scores in the high range, however, it remains unclear how much of the budget will be used to supporting present initiatives before utilizing funding to implement FY 2013 RTT goals and objectives.</p>		

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant indicates a strong teaching and learning infrastructure to sustain instructional efforts beyond the scope of the grant. Technology and personnel outside classroom teachers are not sustainable and reliant on future grants to support them.</p> <p>Strengths: The applicant has a robust budget and sustainability table with evidence of analysis of budgets and sustainability.</p> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application indicates that money is needed to sustain 1:1 technology efforts already in place. Since sustainability of the last initiative was not feasible it remains unclear what is different about this proposal that would ensure sustainability after the technology is purchased. Further, since this funding is necessary to continue the last initiative, it bears consideration that the full amounts described in the budget are actually unavailable if being redirected to fund old initiatives, e.g... "These RTT3 funds will be used to supplement the imitative already in place..."</li> <li>• It is unclear that the district has support from state and local government leaders (no letters of support from this stakeholder group) although it is noted that the Mayor did have the application for a 10 day comment period. Most of the letters of support are from school stakeholders.</li> <li>• A distinct, three-year post grant budget remains unclear.</li> <li>• There lacks a persuasive argument of how improvements in productivity will be used to inform the post-grant budget.</li> </ul> <p>The Score of this section is in the middle range due to a lack of clarity of how the applicant will sustain the 1:1 technology without grant funding. For example, Kindle fires get broken. What will be the funding mechanism for replacing/updating nearly a million dollars in technology? This section lacks a compelling arguement and evidence of a high-quality plan per RTT standards.</p>		

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

This priority section highlights partnerships with various community and educational agencies but lacks a compelling argument that the partner activities will directly provide integrated services to impact outcomes. For example: The Delta Sigma Theta and AAUW groups have organized a Reading is Fundamental initiative in all elementary schools. The comparable performance measure is to "Increase the number and percentage of students reading on grade level," but what is unclear is what the goals and objectives of the initiatives are. It is unclear how teachers are collaborating with the civic groups or any indication that the initiative is having a measurable impact on the students.

**Strengths:**

- Partnership with Ft. Valley State University to implement the Neer Peer Grant and utilizes college leadership students as mentors. (However, this was tied to a math outcome, and there is no mechanism for ensuring that FVSU college students have capacities for or actually do tutor the students in math)
- Partnership with police for a healthy life choice program, however, there were no student outcomes or link to social, emotional or behavioral outcomes. The outcomes were tied to discipline referrals, but classroom behavior link was not made to the program.

**Weakness:**

- The applicant provides a bulleted list of desired student outcomes but the list is not directly linked to civic partnerships.
- Watchdogs is definitely a successful program at Byron Elementary with over 100 fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father figures, but does not represent a district-wide initiative that increases the number of participating parents and families engaged in the decision-making about solutions to improve results over time.

This section is scored in the middle range due to a lack of alignment between the section subpoint requirements and the information listed in the section. It was difficult to determine what information answered each of the subpoint requirements.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shows a successful previous effort to secure funding for current 1:1 technology at the district high school, its lowest achieving school. Common Core State Standards implementation is under way as well as utilization of a new data system provided by the state.

What remains unclear is whether the applicant is defining "personalized learning environments" as the professional development for teachers to better understand how differentiated instruction and RTI interface (as mentioned in the vision section) or if personalized learning environments are self-directed student use of 1:1 technology (as mentioned in the budget section). Both could contribute to personalized learning environments, however, a coherent definition of personalized learning environment remains unclear.

The district now plans to expand 1:1 technology to lower grades and to have teachers spend professional development time in studying the intersection between differentiated instruction and RTI and expand project based learning efforts already underway. The district has a good track record of reform and the PLEP offers strong evidence that core assurance

areas will be addressed.

Very little was stated about the cross-curricular use of the 1:1 technology and necessary aspects for providing equitable opportunities for students and parents' use of the technology. Though the district would have abundant technology, what tools are going to be in place to make sure the technology was being used in the best ways to enhance learning for all subgroups, and in an equitable way for students and families? Equity remains a question mark as various initiatives, such as the push-in program, availability of technology for low-income, and access for EL families are not as explicit as they could have been.

The district has provided a substantial application that contains most of the elements required in the application. The emphasis on graduation is apparent, though not as strong as it could be. For example, In the students' K-5 years, there is a minimum requirement of only two exposures to career information. Scale-up would require increased efforts for multiple exposures and a ramp-up of current efforts.

Various strategies are in place to track and accelerate student achievement. Mechanisms are in place for professional development, increased teaming and collaboration, along with data analysis and instructional emphasis on project-based learning.

The application and accompanying tables do address the issues of decreasing achievement gaps across student groups, yet it was difficult to determine how incremental increases were derived.

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core assurances areas. The application's strength centers on the PLEP, which offers key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for carrying out the activities. The application meets Absolute Priority 1.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>149</b>
--------------	------------	------------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0006GA-3 for Peach County School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

PCSD appears to be well-grounded in both district and state-level educational reform, through its own Professional Learning Environment Plan (PLEP) and the state's RT3 Scope of Work. The application adequately describes its current work in each of the four core educational assurance areas. For example, PCSD describes in some detail its ongoing work in the implementation of Georgia's standards, including a district Curriculum and Instruction Team that leads its own standards implementation and provides specialized job-embedded professional development for teachers through its common core summit. PCSD has one identified Lowest Achieving School, and describes appropriately its efforts with that school and with schools feeding into the school.

The district's reform vision is clear and appears to be credible, in that the various reform strategies are integrated vertically K-12 and laterally with Georgia's reform efforts. The strategies include both in-school and out-of-school opportunities for students in the district, and identifies multiple pathways for students in achieving success. For example, PCSD provides a

Summer Bridge Program for students transitioning from middle school to high school and has in place Dual Enrollment and Community Problem Solvers as out-of-school opportunities for students to learn. The three high school academies offer increased equity for students, in differentiating pathways of learning.

There is little direct description of the proposed classroom environment for students and teachers, although some description can be inferred from the list of district efforts.

This section scores in the at the low end of the high range, due to the lack of direct description of the proposed personalized learning environments for students and teachers.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
--	-----------	-----------

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD will include all of its schools in the proposal, and the district collectively meets the the grant eligibility requirements, having the appropriate percentages for participating students from low-income families, those who are high-need students, and participating educators. The district conducts an annual data review for each school, which highlights strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and trends, which served as the basis for all-district selection for the grant. A list of participating schools with data on participating students has been provided in Table A2, in accordance with the competition's requirements.

This section scores at the top of the high range, as all information requested has been provided.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of A3 provides more specific information as to how the goals and strategies are expected to complement each other. A list of specific strategies intended to lead to successful scale-up are provided. For example, the emphasis on student achievement will be enhanced by the integration of Increased Learning Time, project-based-learning, standards-based classroom, and the tiered learning approach all working in a coordinated fashion.

An apparent weakness in the plan lies in the timeline. Nearly all implementation activities have the same timeline of 2014-17 or 2014-18. This makes it difficult for the reviewer to get a sense of how early- and mid-implementation modifications will be made as part of scale-up, since all activities have the same end point. The timeline as written may not offer sufficient information for thoughtful scale-up and district-wide change.

This section scores in the low end of the high range, due to the vagueness of the timeline.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

All requested tables are provided in this section. PCSD indicates its goal is to match ESEA targets in student performance and to meet state ESEA targets for graduation. Data are provided overall and for each district ESEA subgroup, by subject area overall and by grade level. The goals for increased college enrollment do not appear to be tied to a state goal or criterion -- at least none was provided in the text.

In the tables on CRCT summative assessments, it appears that Black students and English Learners have some very steep goals in the first year. For example, in Reading, Blacks are to increase from 79% proficient to 91.5% proficient in the first year, which seems overly ambitious. Subsequent goals are more modest. Similarly, in mathematics, ELs are to increase from 59% proficient to 81.2% proficient in the first year, with subsequent goals being more modest. There are some similar high jumps in the EOCT assessments, which presume a precipitous first year of implementation. If played out a little longer in time, the overall goals appear achievable.

The tables on decreasing achievement gaps use a methodology of identifying the lowest achieving subgroups and the highest achieving subgroups in each subject area. Each goal area states that the lowest achieving subgroup will meet the state subgroup target (for that group) and will decrease the gap by 1-3% annually. (High school annual decreases show more variety, ranging from 1% to 5%.) The state targets are not identified numerically. To its credit, the district's plan does not seek to reduce the gap by holding the highest achieving group stagnant in its performance.

In the table on graduation rates, PCSD includes all ESEA student subgroups, and the numerical goals are linked to the state's graduation targets.

In the table on college enrollment, PCSD identifies a 2% increase in college enrollment rates for each subgroup. It is difficult to understand how PCSD has a baseline rate of 72% in 2012-13, when no individual student subgroup has a rate of more than 36%. It appears that each subgroup is compared against the total group.

This section scores in the high end of the middle range, due to confusions noted about steep targets for some groups, and the calculations in the college enrollment rates.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD has provided data tables highlighting its areas of improved student learning over time. PCSD cites improvement against state comparisons as well as improvement against its own prior performance. The application provides tables in its appendices reviewing its past four years of data in several areas. Although much work remains on meeting annual goals for Black and English Learner students at all grade levels and in all subject areas, PCSD does cite modest gains in the performance of Hispanic students and more substantial gains for Students with Disabilities. The tables indicate that PCSD has not met its annual goals for graduation rate in the past four years, and no information is provided in the tables about college enrollment rates.</p> <p>The application cites numerous specific reform efforts conducted with its lowest achieving school, Peach County High School, since 2009. Changes have occurred in the school's 9-12 structure, with the initiation of several academies. Curriculum has been redesigned to reflect state standards, and instructional delivery has substantially changed using Project-based learning. It also appears that the adult culture at the school has changed, with both horizontal and vertical teaming assignments. The graduation rate and college-going rate were not listed as part of improvement that has taken place.</p> <p>PCSD provides several opportunities for student performance data to be made available to students and parents, both in written form and electronically. PCSD cites regular use of student data by teachers and administrators to inform and modify instruction.</p> <p>This section scores in the high end of the middle range, due to the ongoing difficulties with increasing the achievement of Black and English Learner students.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD indicates that it does provide publicly the four categories of school-level expenditures in the (a) through (d) segments of this section. In addition, PCSD describes the openness of its budget development and use process. The district makes use of its own communication processes and those of the state, including posting on the district's website and annual salary reports, with quarterly updates. The application includes an example of its salary and non-personnel expenditures reports in the appendices. The sample report provides a breakdown of salaries and benefits for each school by instructional support staff and instructional staff, and non-personnel expenditures, and the information is publicly available. The sample report shows all the requested categories.</p> <p>This section scores in the high range, as it has answered the question appropriately.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD indicates that it has sufficient autonomy with both its Board and with the state to carry out its reform efforts. Thus far, the district has been able to implement its reform work without alteration to current district policies -- including the reconfiguration of the high school structure and teaching responsibilities. PCSD cites one example of a district procedure that has been changed/developed to describe the functions of teachers as advisors. Additional specific examples of the</p>		

district's success in implementing reform were not provided.

This section scores in the middle of the middle range, due to the general nature of its response and lack of specificity in examples.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
--	-----------	-----------

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD provided a number of opportunities for staff, parents, students, and community members to be involved in the development of the district's PLEP and in the development of the competitive grant. Stakeholders completed surveys indicating their support and provided comments and suggestions. Data were provided on the survey results of parents/community members and teachers, but not for students. Over 90% of the district's teachers completed surveys concerning the proposal, and 99% of those responding indicated their support. Fifty-seven teachers included comments and suggestions, which were taken into account by the district for application revision. There is no teacher bargaining entity in the district. The application is silent on the role of principals in the development and review process, except to say that principals sent the proposal to their teachers via email.

PCSD requested letters of support from community groups and included them in the appendices. For example, PCSD received letters of support from a variety of sources, including the Literacy Education for Adults in Peach, Blue Bird Corporation, PTA representatives and graduation coaches, parents, and Fort Valley State University. The proposal was reviewed by the local mayor, as required. PCSD provided the proposal to the SEA, but the state declined to review it.

This section scores in the low end of the high range, due to the lack of information about principals, who will be critical to the successful implementation of the grant.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of C1 provides more specific information as to how the goals and strategies in the PLEP are intended to prepare students for college and career.

It appears that PCSD has done strong preparation work in embedding the Georgia state standards in literacy and mathematics. The district makes use of the Georgia 2010 BRIDGE act as a key vehicle in providing college and career preparation experiences. A number of the benefits to students of the BRIDGE act are described in this section's narrative, including designing career development goals and selection of coursework in targeted areas of interest. In addition, the district has developed Individual Career plans at the middle school and Teachers as Advisors at all school levels.

Little is said about the incorporation of ongoing culturally diverse perspectives beyond Heritage Week and social studies lessons. The proposal is also silent on the proposed development of deep learning and career-essential skills (goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, etc) beyond the mention of Teachers as Advisors.

There appears to be a great deal of information coming from the Georgia Longitudinal Data System related to personalized learning environments, such as digital resources linked to career readiness and a learning management system, but little is said about instructional approaches and modifications to enhance student learning using such data. The quality of content is not addressed, nor is there detail on accommodations for high needs students.

An apparent weakness in the plan lies in the timeline. Nearly all implementation activities have the same timeline of 2014-17 or 2014-18. This makes it difficult for the reviewer to get a sense of how early- and mid-implementation modifications will be made as part of developing a comprehensive learning system, since all activities have the same end point.

This section scores in the middle part of the middle range, due to the lack of information on the quality and approaches to learning, and to the vagueness of the timeline.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>
--	-----------	-----------

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of C2 provides more specific information as to how the goals and strategies in the PLEP are intended to improve teaching and learning.

(a) It appears that PCSD has already made substantial steps in establishing and supporting professional teams and communities for teachers. For example, teachers participate in district monthly collaborative meetings to plan differentiated instruction, as well as monthly grade band meetings to work collaboratively on progression of standards -- all in support of personalized learning environments for improved instructional practice and student achievement of standards. Schools use the state Longitudinal Data System and Georgia Student Growth Model to get information on student progress in order to design appropriate instructional lesson plans. In 2012-13, PCSD fully implemented the Georgia Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems (TKES and LKES), the state teacher and administrator evaluation systems, used to identify highly qualified individuals. The application cites the TKES domain of Differentiated Instruction as the setting for conversations/actions related to effectiveness in designing personalized learning environments. PCSD admits that this domain is a difficult one for teachers to demonstrate proficiency, and is putting in place supports and resources for teachers in this area.

(b) In addition to the data collected from TKES, schools are now establishing data teams to review current student performance. PCSD has plans to integrate instructional technology into instructional practices, but is at the beginning stages in this work.

(c) PCSD appears to have regular, ongoing training and resources in structuring effective learning environments, including the use of the Teacher Induction Plan, external mentors, and monthly district training/support. In order to increase the number of students receiving instruction from highly effective teachers, PCSD has partnerships with local IHEs for student teaching placements, with a regional educational service agency for hiring TAPP-trained teachers, and aggressive recruitment practices for hard-to-staff schools and specialty areas.

An ongoing weakness in the district's overall high quality plan lies in the timeline. Nearly all implementation activities have the same timeline of 2014-17 or 2014-18. This makes it difficult for the reviewer to get a sense of how teaching and leading processes and technologies will be used and modified over time as part of developing effective personalized learning environments.

This section scores in the top end of the middle range, because it has some areas of strong development, such as (a), but is only emerging in other areas, such as (b) and (c). The vagueness of the plan timeline is also a weakness.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of D provides more specific information as to how the district will support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure.

The district's organizational chart, provided in the appendices, shows the close relationship between Curriculum and Instruction and principals, support services, assessment, special education, technology, gifted, and ESOL. Oddly, Title I services appear to be managed apart from Curriculum and Instruction. All schools have site leadership teams which appear to have flexibility and autonomy in scheduling, etc. Examples are cited of site decisions on calendars, minimum days, use of resources, etc. The application cites two high school/middle school supports for multi-faceted mastery opportunities (such as the three high school academies), and two supports for elementary. The application cites Increased Learning Time, instructional technology, and project-based learning as resources/practices that provide access to all students. The application does not provide information on the projected learning trajectory for students receiving ESL services.

This section scores in the high range, because it does address each element of the section's questions, although it

provides little information on the resources for ELL students. It is also a concern that Title I is managed apart from Curriculum and Instruction in the district's organization chart.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of C2 provides more specific information as to how the goals and strategies in the PLEP are intended to improve teaching and learning.

PCSD provides a variety of resources for parents and other stakeholders in the area of learning resources, including workshops, parent coordinators, Parent Portal, etc. Parents may use technology at their school, in Parent Resource Centers, and/or in the public library. While it appears that resources are available to all families, regardless of income, no mention is made of resources for parents who do not speak English. A wide variety of technical support is cited for students, educators, parents, and other stakeholders, including such support provided by the Georgia Department of Education. There are four Instructional facilitators to support teachers and students at the middle schools and high school. Two such facilitators work at the K-5 level, although the district hopes to increase the number and capacity of these facilitators. In-school resources such as Increased Learning Time, are mentioned. Out-of-school resources for study preparation and tutoring are also listed as available. The breadth of resources is commendable. PCSD provides Infinite Campus and Parent Portal as its open data format system, and integrates information from these systems with other formats. Although PCSD uses CSI Accounting for human resources and finance, it does not appear that the system is interoperable with student information data and instructional improvement system data.

This section scores in the middle range due to the lack of an interoperable system, and the lack of information about resources for parents who do not speak English.

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of E provides more specific information as to how the the applicant will implement a rigorous continuous improvement process.

The district currently has a Step-by-Step Process for Continuous Improvement, which is used to monitor and measure current strategies and programs. The process includes data analysis, goal identification, development of action plans for each strategy, plan implementation and assessments of results. PCSD will build on this process for continuous improvement with its RTTT grant by following the same steps and providing regular information on the process. The Director of Grants and Title I Director make monthly school monitoring visits. It is not clear how those administrators, who work outside of Curriculum and Instruction purview, will adequately represent the continuous improvement strengths and weaknesses of the personalized learning environment initiative, nor how they communicate directly with Curriculum and Instruction personnel about their findings.

An annual academic and resource needs assessment will be conducted, although the application does not say if these assessments are at the school level or only the district level. The application does not provide specifics on how these assessments will be conducted, although it states that the results will be shared publicly. At the school level, the site leadership teams will carry the major responsibility for continuous improvement. PCSD states in general terms how information about investments in professional development, technology, and staff will be gathered and summarized annually.

This section scores in the middle range, due to lack of specificity about the incorporation of modifications based on continuous improvement, and the relationship of monthly site visits to curriculum and instruction.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of E2 provides more specific information as to how the goals and strategies in the PLEP are intended to provide ongoing communication and engagement.</p> <p>PCSD outlines a multi-faceted approach to communicate and engage with its internal and external stakeholders, including focus groups, use of parent/community liaisons, informational newsletters, open forums, etc. Only general information is provided about these strategies. There is no information about which of these strategies provide information to parents who do not speak English.</p> <p>This section scores in the middle range, because it does provide a multi-faceted approach to communication and input-gathering from stakeholders. More specific information about the strategies to be used would have made the district's intent clearer.</p>		

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The application does provide tables for each of the required performance measures, and does indicate the rationale for selection of the measure, the use of the measure in providing information, and the district's proposed review and improvement of the measure. PCSD has identified 14 performance measures, and has done a fine job of integrating its own PLEP goals with those required by this application. PCSD has selected a reduction in absences as an indicator for all grades K-12 as a non-academic indicator, although others are included at specific grade spans, as well. At K-12, the number and percentage of students participating in increased learning time was also designated. For grades K-8, mathematics was selected as the academic indicator, although other indicators are also included, such as the percent of students at grade 8 who have an individual graduation plan.</p> <p>For the tables on highly effective teachers/principals, only baseline data are provided.</p> <p>In the table on reducing absences K-12, both baseline and target data are provided for all students and for ESEA subgroups. The first year shows substantial expectations for increases, with modest increases in following years. Overall, the goals seem attainable, but not the gains in the first year.</p> <p>The table on increased learning time indicates an expectation of 100% participation for all students every year.</p> <p>The table on number and percent of students reading on grade level (by grade 3) contains a substantial increase in the first year for all students (82% to 94.6%) and then modest gains after that. Similarly, there are steep jumps in the first year for students in mathematics in grades 3-8 (69% to 88.1%). The table on 9-12 proficiency in Algebra EOCT also shows a wide disparity in baseline performance, as well as post-grant expectations. For example, 20.3% of White students met proficiency in the baseline year, but are expected to show 74.5% proficiency in the post-grant year (2017-18). However, 10% of Black students met proficiency in the baseline year, but are only expected to meet 33% proficiency in 2017-18.</p> <p>The table on discipline referrals in grades 4-8 reflects a wide variation in current referrals. For example, white student referrals are currently at 3.2%, while Black referrals are at 77%. The 2017-18 post-grant goal only looks for a reduction in Black referrals to 66%, which does not appear to be ambitious. The same is true for the table on discipline referrals at grades 9-12.</p> <p>This section scores in the high end of the middle range, because it does appropriately provide all of the required performance measures. The disparities in expectations among student subgroups should be considered carefully by PCSD.</p>		

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Again, PCSD has an overall plan for RTTT, which is found in the appendices. This overall plan meets the requirements of high quality. In this section, PCSD provides some additional information, not in the form of a plan, which deals specifically with its methods to evaluate its effectiveness. PCSD indicates multiple ways in which its professional development activities will be evaluated, including individual professional evaluation forms filled out by participants and the use of the</p>		

Georgia School Keys system. This system has eight strands and each component in the strand has a four point scoring rubric for its evaluation. For example, professional learning will be evaluated by the district and schools using multiple strands and standards, providing a consistency in scoring for all sites. Similarly, the use of technology will be evaluated in multiple ways, including surveys, usage reports, observations, and other data reports. Some of these tools appear to already be in existence (e.g., usage reports, Georgia School Keys and Teacher Keys), while other appear to be under development (e.g., classroom and student observations, surveys). The variety and depth of these evaluation tools are commendable.

This section scores in the high range, because of the multiple methods of rigorously evaluating funded key activities.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposed budget divides the grant funds into four equal installments of \$2,500,000 and includes no other sources of funding. The budget tables include those for the overall budget and project-level budget summaries with accompanying narratives. Each of the project narratives adequately explains the use of the funds and has itemized costs within the budget. The budget items appear to be reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal. For example, the budget summary project list appropriately reflects the goals from the PLEP, and are described in some detail in the narrative section. This level of congruence is to be commended. One-time costs include equipment and supplies, and some of the professional development. Indirect and audit costs are also considered to be one-time.</p> <p>Plans for sustainability are found in section F2. For example, much of the early professional development conducted by outside providers is intended to be internalized and replicated over time using internal personnel. PCSD has conducted a careful analysis of its proposed costs and costs for sustainability.</p> <p>This section scores in the high range, as it is a thoughtful description of the proposed use of RTTT funds.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD has an overall plan for district reform, the Personalized Learning Environment Plan, located in the application appendix. The PLEP does include goals, strategies, resources, persons responsible, timelines, and suggested means of evaluation and evidence -- all of the required elements of a high-quality plan as defined in RTTT. The narrative section of F provides more specific information as to how PCSD will evaluate its investments and improvements. For each initiative listed in the budget sections, a table is provided for the sustainability of that initiative post-grant.</p> <p>In this section, PCSD has provided its sustainability plans for each of its major initiatives within the proposed grant. The application refers to a Program Effectiveness plan to evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and to inform future investments, but little detail is provided. No three-year post-grant budget is provided, although this section does refer to a number of the initiatives as not needing additional cost after the grant is concluded (e.g., Increased Learning Time, use of data, targeted differentiated instruction). No specific mention is made of support from State and government leaders.</p> <p>This section scores in the middle range, because the sustainability for each initiative is nicely organized and described, but there is no post-grant budget.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>PCSD has a number of existing partnerships that foster increased student achievement, such as dual enrollment with various colleges and universities, and the Near Peer mentoring project with Fort Valley State University. Rather than gathering these existing partnerships into a coherent set of measurable outcomes, it appears that all the existing efforts will</p>		

just carry forward in their current status. For example, Literacy Education for Adults in Peach (LEAP) is a countywide initiative to assist adults to get their GEDs, but is not mentioned as prioritizing parents in the PCSD schools.

The application does not specifically state that all schools and all students will be included in all the activities of the Competitive Preference, although it is implied. Some of the supports/resources are targeted to individual schools (e.g., Byron Lions Club), but the applicable population is still all students. The district's lowest performing school is included in these lists, but not with a sense of priority.

This section lacks the coherence of a unifying premise, and lacks specific information about integration of services and capacity building. Little information is provided about component (c), a decision-making process to evaluate and prioritize these supports.

This section scores in the middle range due to the fragmented and general nature of its narrative.

## Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>This application is helped by being coherent and comprehensive in its foundation, by having its own district Personalized Learning Environment Plan (PLEP) and its strong relationship to Georgia's RTTT implementation plan. The application has a clear sense of what a personalized learning environment should be (vision), and has many appropriate strategies to implement such environments. For example, PCSD describes classrooms in which students are engaged in investigations or projects, are using group skills to work collaboratively, have identified products and performances, and use college and career-ready standards as the basis of evaluation. A number of supports and resources are already in place (project-based learning, Parent Portals, high school academies, teacher professional communities, etc.), while others are in development ( systemic use of instructional technology facilitators, use of student data, teacher and administrator evaluation systems, etc.). The four core assurances are addressed throughout the proposal, as they are interwoven effectively within the district's PLEP.</p> <p>The application is hurt by differentiated expectations for student performance, particularly for Black and ELL subgroups. Academic expectations for these groups and expectations for reductions in referrals are particularly troubling.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>150</b>