Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0202LA-1 for Plaquemines Parish School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section scores mid-high due to the applicant providing extensive details on its work in the four educational assurance areas by adopting CCSS, building a comprehensive data system, enhancing instructional practices, and providing personalized learner-centered environments. In addition, the applicant provides extensive and realistic detail as to how they intend to meet each of the assurance areas. This includes creating a personalized academic plan for all students.

However, it is not clear as to how their project components will be linked to goals and outcomes . The applicant lacks detail in how their teacher evaluation system changes will result in improving student learning. There is lack of evidence as to how at risk students will be supported and what their classroom experience in a personalized learning community will look like.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides clear evidence of participating schools to include demographic data. This section scores a ten based on the clarity of details in their description of the process they used to select schools. There are two comprehensive tables detailing participating schools and the total number of participating students. The applicant conducted a needs assessment and determined all schools in the district can benefit from grant inutilities. The applicant's goal is to implement a system-wide approach to grant implementation.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Common Core State Standards will be adopted and district curriculum will be redesigned to meet the rigor of these standards. A data system will be created that will measure student success data and will be available to all stakeholders. These two initiatives will be available district wide to all students and staff to include non-participating schools. The applicant does not present a high quality plan for this section because they do not provide detail as to how these two reform initiatives will assist in meeting outcome goals. This section does not meet the full ten points because the applicant indicates these initiatives will accomplish its goals through a model of change, but it is unclear as to how these changes will improve student learning.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a comprehensive vision that outlines their plan to improve student learning. Data details positive growth on state assessments in reading, writing, and math, but the applicant indicates that the state's proficiency levels are not rigorous enough to meet college and career readiness standards. The applicant will adopt CCSS along with the PARCC assessments to increase this rigor. This section scores in the mid-high range due to the lack of detail describing how the applicant will increase college enrollment and graduation rates. The applicant indicates the need to improve in these areas, but does not provide specific details as to how they will meet these initiatives.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Data indicates some growth, however in some instances more than 50% of students are not proficient English Language arts and math. The applicants rural schools have significantly lower performance schools than in the non rural areas. Achievement data for these schools continues to fluctuate from year to year. This section scores in the mid-high range because the applicant continues to struggle to achieve significant reform in its persistently lowest-achieving schools. Parents, students, and educators have access to student performance data through specific portals that require a login. It is unclear as to how parents utilize student data to improve participation, instruction, and services.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high level of transparency regarding public school finances and investments. This section scores high due to current practices in place at the district and state level for publishing salary and expenditure information. The district publishes a staff salary schedule on the district website. In addition, the district publishes their projected annual budget and the actual budget detailing all expenditures.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The State Department supports implementation of personalized learning environments and flexibility of earned credit as long as coursework is approved by the Louisiana department of education. The department of education continues to work with district leaders to build a framework for districts to provide personalized learnings environments with a goal of keeping students engaged in their education through graduation.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**10**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section scores in the high range due to comprehensive stakeholder engagement along with 90% teacher buy in. The applicant does not detail as to how parents and students were involved in the development of the proposal.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Goals are built around college and career readiness standards and personalized learning environments. It is unclear as to how each of these will be implemented prek through twelfth grade. The applicant's goal is to have all students meeting college and career ready by graduation with the assistance of instructional coaches, but their is no detail as to how this will be accomplished. The details focus on instructional routines, professional learning communities, and data driven instruction. There is a lack of evidence of how students will participate in deep learning that meets their individual needs. The plan lacks a high quality plan of action.

The applicant is providing high performing students with enriched digital learning opportunities. There is no evidence that these opportunities will also be offered to low performing students to enhance their learning experience. All students can benefit from a variety of learning experiences to meet their needs.

This section scores in the middle range because it does not address the need to provide a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments to all students including students who struggle, special education, and English Language learners. It is unclear as to how students will be prepared to be college and career ready by graduation starting in preK. It is also unclear as to how the individualized learning plans will be implemented to meet individual needs.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**7**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Educators and staff will participate in multiple professional development opportunities to include, CCSS implementation, identifying optimal learning approaches, and strategies for monitoring student progress. It is unclear as to how these opportunities will support the implementation of personalized learning environments, how student progress will be measured so instruction can be adapted to meet individual needs, and how feedback from the evaluation system will improve principal and teacher effectiveness.

Student performance data is currently monitored and reviewed, but additional professional development is needed to increase teacher knowledge for utilizing data to make instructional decisions. The district will provide professional development, instructional coaches, implement streamlined curriculum mapped to CCSS, and personalized learning environments to support the knowledge gap.

This section scores in the low-middle range due to the lack of clarity as to how all of the professional development pieces, the use of instructional coaches, and the implementation of the personalized learning environments will meet the needs of all instructional staff and learners. It is also unclear as to how information provided by the principal and teacher evaluation system will increase student achievement.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA will be organized to meet the needs of grant initiatives. It is unclear whether additional staff will be hired to support school based implementation to include the creation of various supervisory support teams. Each school will implement a school support team that will be chosen by the principal. This team will monitor and over see day to day implementation of grant initiatives onsite.

Students will be given the opportunity to test out of courses to earn credit towards graduation, Students will have an opportunity to choose from a menu of standards-aligned options to demonstrate mastery of content. This may include web based tasks, portfolios, games, teaching others, and paper and pencil assessments.

Gaps continue to exist for special education students and English Language learners. The applicant plans to utilize grant funding to improve teaching and learning for high need students. The site based support team will work with instructional staff to build support in the classroom to assist with high need students.

This section scores in the mid range because even though it details a vast amount of support for project implementation, it is unclear as to how all of these initiatives will be streamlined to meet the needs of all learners. In addition it is unclear as to how the plan will support instructional staff prek through grade twelve. This section does not describe a high-quality plan based on the vagueness of details for their plan.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will utilize grant funds to enhance their current technology systems so that teachers, students, and parents can access necessary content, tools and other learning resources in and out of school. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, laptops, document cameras, and integrated sound systems. This section scores in the mid range because it is unclear as to the types of tools and resources the applicant plans to offer besides student data access. It is also unclear as to how LEA and schools will acquire and utilize interoperable data systems with the use of grant funding.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**3**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will utilize the newly designed data system along with leadership teams to focus on continuous improvement during the grant period. The district will provide a report on grant progress to all stakeholders in face to face and online formats. This section scores low because it does not present a high-quality plan. It is unclear as to how the district will publicly share this information. In addition, it is unclear as to how rigorous continuous improvement will continue after the term of the grant. The plan provided is vague in that it lacks rigor in how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information in a timely manner with regular feedback.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will publish project information in quarterly newsletters and in local news papers describing key events and information regarding grant progress. In addition, this information will be posted on school websites and school newsletters. It is unclear as to how external stakeholders will be engaged in the districts communication initiatives outside receiving a newsletter or reading the local paper.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant details 14 performance measures that span from prek through grade twelve. The applicant provides detail on the purpose of selecting each of the assessments. This section scores in the low range due to the lack of detail as to how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. There is some detail as to how the assessments will be monitored, but it is unclear as to how the monitoring will review and improve the measure over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will utilize internal staff to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of grant initiatives. The district will also gather and monitor qualitative and quantitative data to verify changes in practice are taking place. These results will be presented in quarterly reports and shared with the public. This section scores in the low range due to the lack of clarity as to how grant initiatives will be continuously improved based on reflections from grant evaluation. Also, the applicant's grant evaluation process is vague and does not support a high-quality or rigorous plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project. However, there is no identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs. They do not provide a cost basis for any of their line items. The budget lacks rational for expenditures. The application indicates no additional staff will be hired, but the budget indicates the need for additional staff. This section scores in the low range due to this lack of clarity and rational for expenditures.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will utilize Title 1, Title II and IDEA funding to help supplement grant initiatives. This section scores low due to the applicant not providing a high quality plan for sustainability of the project goals. There is no detail as to how the plan will include support from state and local government leaders as well as how the applicant will evaluate improvements and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide detail for this section.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not meet absolute priority 1 because they lack detail regarding their plan to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching. It is unclear as to how personalized learning environments will be created, monitored, and improve student achievement. It is also unclear as to how the applicant will accelerate student achievement and deepen learning by meeting the academic needs of all students.

Total	**210**	**100**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0202LA-2 for Plaquemines Parish School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant has developed a comprehensive academic plan that focus on students from birth to grade 12.. The Plaquemines Parish School Systems' vision is built around three initiatives that address (Early Start,birth-grade 4),(Transition, grades 5 and 8), (College and Career Readiness, grades 9-12), that will provide personalized learning paths that support students mastering essential skills and deeping understanding of content and with focus on college and career readiness. The district's academic plan will also address the training of parents, pre-school teachers and informal childcare providers in early language and literacy experiences.

. The Applicant provided extensive detail on how to meet each four core educational assurances areas.The district approach will focus on: 1. Adopting Common Core Standards, 2. Redesigning the curriculum and assessment system to align with the Common Core Standards, 3. Building a student data system that measures student's growth and informs teachers and principals to make instructional decisions that meet the needs of all children, 4. Addressing the needs of the lower performing schools by personalizing learner-centered environments that aligns with their curriculum, assessments and their three vision initiatives in meeting the needs of all students, 5. Establishing student learning targets with a focus on the Common Core Standards, 6. Aligning a career cluster model to create career pathways in each of it's high schools, 7. Providing parental involvement by traing parents in making informed decisions regarding their child's academic and career requirements, 8. Creating an Early College Academy for at-risk students by blending high school and college

coursework to enable students to receive a high school dipolma and associate degree.

. The Applicant presented a comprehensive description of what a classroom will look like for students and teachers participating in a personalized learning environment. The classroom setting will move from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered one, students will participate in small group and whole group project-based and inquiry-based tasks, student desks will be configurated to create learning spaces for collaborative and individualized student's activities which reflects personalized and projet-based learning and teachers's role will become one of a facilitator of learning.

. The Applicant's plan was not clear if earning certification career will be accessible to all students.

. The plan addresses student outcomes but does not explain it's link to personalized learning.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant gave a comprehensive description of the current status of The Plaquemines Parish School System and it's conditions as a result Hurricane Katrina. The district in consisted of 4,086 participating students (Pre-K-12) of which 66.2% of it's students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch.. A table is provided reflecting a list of the 7 participating schools (1 Primary School, 2 Elementary Schools, 1 Middle School, 3 High Schools), and their State Achievement Test scores(2011-2012) and graduation rate. The percentage of low income students range 41% to as high as 91% in the lower area end of the district's Parish.

. The Applicant provided evidence of a process of selecting participating schools. The school district is small and the district conducted an assessment of teachers and schools and found at risk students were included in all of the schools with participating teachers and students from low income families. The process ensures that the participating school meets the grant's eligibility requirements.

. The Applicant provided a data table outlining the schools' demographics including the numbers of participating educators, students, high need and low income families and students.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant has chosen to accomplish it's goals through a model of change by adopting more rigorous standards for learning and redesigning it's curriculum and assessment system so that it aligns with the Common Core Standards. The district will upgrade it's data system to provide all stakeholders with information related to requirements of graduation dipoma tracks and career pathways.

. The Applicant provided insufficent evidence describing how the proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and how it's plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students including students with disabilities and economically disadvantage students.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant identified the district's performance on summative assessments being used (Louisiana State Proficient Exam, LEAP,iLEAP, Common Unit Assessments ACT) to develop student proficiency and growth. The district will chart student growth using the ACT standards for college readiness. A chart is provided that outlines each participating school's assessment used for each of their subgroups and the baselines and projected growth goals that spans from 2012-2016 of grant funding ant 1 year (2017) post grant funding.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the district's desired vision that is likely to result in improved performance in summative assessment, decreasing achivement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The district will address closing the achievement gap by developing new Common Core Assessments that will be reflective of student's growth as a result of their participation in personalized learning environment.

. The district will implement individual learning plans in each participating school to reduce achievement gaps in the specal education subgroups and will strive to increase graduation rate from 36.40% to 47.30% in the year of the grant funding and increasing thereafter the four year grant reaching 75%. The district plans to focus on increasing the number of students

who will enroll in a post-secondary program and will collaborate with local colleges and universities to provide insight as to how to increase college enrollment.

The Applicant did not provide sufficent data that addtrss the need of more frequent meetings of stakeholders to address the proposal's goals for improved student oucomes. The proposal indicated meetings being held three time a year. To monitor the grant'sdevelopment, weekly or monthly should be held to focus on each of the grant's components.

.The Applicant provided limited detail of how to increase college enrollment rate. The proposal's plan for increasing college enrollment rate is by collaborating with local colleges and universities to provide valuable insight.

. The Applicant noted that students were doing well in academic areas, but the proposal's graph reflected a downward spiral in student achievement and data was not provided for English Language Learners.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant developed data that provided evidence of the district's demonstrated record of success in advancing student student learning and achievement and increased equity in learning and teaching. A Chart and a graph were developed reflecting the district's increased performance in reading and math basic proficiency scores in grades 3-8 during the past four years.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the schools' use of their data in advancing student learning and achievement.

. The Applicant identified three of the district's lowest performing schools(1 Elementary and 2 high Schools) located in rural and economically depressed areas in the east bank of the parish. The district is making progress in moving these schools to address lowering the percentage of teacher turnover due to the distance they have to travel. A chart is provided reflecting each of the low performing school's improved achievement in reading and math and their over-all performance scores over a three year period.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the district making student performance data available to students, educators and parents.. Teachers post grades using an electronic grade book that has a parent portal attached. All parents have access to usernames and passwords to access student's grades. Report cards are provided quarterly and parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents have access to their child's performance on State proficiency exams and End of the Course Tests.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the percentage of parents without internet connectivity and the district's plans to allivate this problem. It is also unclear of how parents with connectivity will use the student performance data with their children.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided evidence to the extent it has already made available actual personnel salaries of instructional staff, teachers and non-personnel staff.

. The Applicant describes the use of the district's website and the State Department of Education website to share public school finances and investments. Each year the district publishes a staff salary schedule, the projected annual budget and the actual budget showing expenditures by the school board including personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures. A School Board town hall meeting is held for public comments on the budject before approval.

. The Applicant has not addressed the various ways of making available the actual personnel salaries, and district and school-level expenditures at each of the participating schools.

. Beacause they have not yet demonstrated a high level of transparency in all levels required by the grant, this element scores in the middle range.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant has demonstrated substantive evidence that the district has access to the right conditions with appropriate level of autonomy to implement their proposed interventions under the State's legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. Their current State laws and regulations allows for districts and schools to go beyond the mimimum in creating innovative courses and programs that are either approved by locall school boards or the State Department of Education. The State is continuing to work with the district leaders to expand the opportunities to provide for personalized learning with the goal of keeping students in school and graduating with a high school diploma.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the district's new teacher/leader evaluation system. Teachers and Leaders are evaluated annually using a four-tiered rating system whereby half of the evaluation is based on achievement of student's learning targets and the half based on observation of instructional practices.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**10**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant's school district has demonstrated substantive evidence of stakeholders engagement in the development of the proposal. The district and the school's site leadership groups and community groups met to determine if the district should proceed with implementing the proposal, and after it's approval, they met to review the proposal and make recommendations for each aspect of the proposal. Once the proposal's draft was fulliy developed, it was shared with stakeholders for gaining information and providing feedback.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the extent LEAs parents were involved in the proposal's development. It would have been helpful to provide more various avenues used for sharing information and providing feedback with all stakeholders regarding the proposal's development progress. Examples(school meetings, newspapers, bulletins)

. The Applicant provided evidence parent training being provided but did not address how they will conduct the training for low income families or how the families were involved in the develoment process of the proposal.

. The district is not a collective bargaining district. Signatures were obtained from over 90% of teachers and administrators which is referenced in the proposal's Appendix. Letters of positive support from key stakeholders are provided in the proposal's Appendix.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided evidence in implementing strategies for all participating schools to accelerate learning aligned to college and career ready standards and graduation requirements.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the district approach to implement instructional strategies that will provide students opportunities to deepen their learning through the development on individual student learning targets that focus on student's academic interest and to enable students to persue a rigorous course of study for college and career ready standards and graduation requirements.

. The Applicant has demonstrated a thoughtful effort in identifying various assessments that will be administered at each grade level. The assessments results will be used in creating personalized learning environments at each participating school and using the information to adapt curriculum instruction. Published sets of students learning targets will be available to students to identify goals link to college and career ready standards and learning goals for each of their unit of study. A personalized sequence of instruction content will focus on skill development designed to enable students to achieve their indivual learning goals and to ensure they are kept on track to graduate and have skills to succeed post secondary.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the proposal's accommodation and high-quality strategies for high need students to ensure they are on track towards meeting college and career standards. Student will be given multiple opportunites to reach mastery after school and during the summer. Remediation using strategies for high need students will be

implemented. The following strategies were noted: 1. Students will receive out of classroom intervention time in an after school tutoring program, 2. A school building level committee at each school site will identify student's continued deficiencies if learning problems persist and an intervention plan will be designed to meet the student's academis needs. 3. Students will be recommended to attend a academic summer camp.

. The Applicant provided evidence of a mechanisms being in place so that all stakeholders receive on-going and regular feedback of student's academic progress and status, however the system does not provide frequent updates of individual student data.. The district has no student data system accessible to stakeholders and the student information system needs to be updated. The grant will enable the district to expand their data system to make all pertinent information available to all stakeholders.

.The Applicant did not provide evidence of students having access to experience diverse cultures through daily delivery of instruction.

. The Applicant did not provide a comprehensive plan of students mastery of developing skills such as goal setting, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills.

. The Applicant provided evidence of the district providing training and support to ensure students they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them. Students and families will receive training by school counselors on the use of the data system and how to use the tools and resources provided in ensuring that students know how to track and manage their learning.

. The Applicant did not present evidence of high quality learning approaches for all students (Special Education English Language Learners).

. The Applicant did not provide evidence for the use of instructional coaches in meeting student's needs to increase achievement and to increase personalized learning environments.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of how high need student's academic needs are addressed.

. The Applicant did not provide clear evidence of each of the propsal's components being implemented for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environments for all students to graduate college and career ready.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**8**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided a reasonable plan for improving teaching and leading by increasing educator's effectiveness in developing a personalized approach to professional development which will focus on the district's student achievement goals: 1. To provide embedded evidence-based instructional practices in classroom instruction. 2. Use of data to identify students at-risk for failure and to provide instructional practices to address the students's academic needs, 3. Use of technology to motivate student's and improve teachers's effectiveness.

.The Applicant did not clearly address how teacher's professional development will support personalized learning environment or how to improve the effectiveness of teacher's professional development.

Evidenve was not provided as to how teacher training is aligned with the common Core Standards.

. The Applicant provided evidence that the district will continue it's use with the new teacher/leader evaluation system which is valued added model and will be aligned to the personalized learning approaches that address the reform plan. Teachers will be trained in the creation of student learning paths that optimize learning and will be provided with strategies to implement personalized learning environments that address student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and possess skills to be college and career ready.

. The Applicant did not address how to keep teacher's teaching practices refreshed and up to date to better improve instruction for all students.

. Administrators will observe and evaluate teachers for improving teacher effectiveness. District teams will work with school site administrators in the implementation of the grant's guidelines of teaching and leading through the use of a coaching model, Discovery Walk Program, that focus on district indicators of classroom observations. Principals will be supported from strong leadership support. Prncipals will received one day a month coaching led by retired principals,

however the qualifications of the retired principals were not provided, especially principal who were assigned to the low performing schools prior to their retirement.

.The applicant needs to provide evidence to address how the Discovery Walk Program will affect the program. More information neeed to be provided regarding the use of this program at the participating schools.

.Coaching will be provided to teachers on the use of instructional tools and resources to support learning goals in the student's classrooms. High quality resources will be aligned to the Commom Core Standards and assessments will be available to teachers through a "Teacher Tool Box" system located on the State Department website. This website will provide other resource information for teacher's use in planning their instruction. Teachers have received training in the State's new evaluation tool and continued training will be provided in the use technology tools to improve their instructional practice.

. The Applicant provided evidence of continued training of school leaders , school leadership teams stakeholders in the use of tools, data, and resources to track and manage student learning for increasing student performance and closing the achievement gap.

. The Applicant provided a reasonable plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including hard to staff schools, subjects and specially areas. The district provides incentitives to address hard to staff schools. The district provides free day care services, tuition assistance, financial assistance for advanced degrees and provide on-going high quality professional development.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of a series of approaches taken by teachers to involve students in discussions, collaborative work, project-based learning, videos and audie and manipulatives.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provides a well-developed organizational structure to support the personalized learning environment for all students participating in the reform plan. The district level teams, Instructional Support Department and Operations Department(technology and finance), have supervisory capacity in providing support, services and resources to assure full implementation of the grant. The district's Instructional Support Departmment selected a Project Director who will oversee all grant activities. The Operation Department technology staff will manage the digital learning platform and provide technical support as a liaision with the vendor chosen for the district's data system.

. The District Team which acts in the district's supervisory capacity will provide participating school's School Support Teams with sufficent flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and aclendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models,role and responsibiities for educators and non-educators and control of school-level budgets. Each participating school's School Support Team is comprised of teacher-leaders(principals,instructional coaches, curriculum specialist). The team will be responsible to monitor the plan's progressand collect data for each of the plan's components.

. The district provided grant autonomy for teachers in developing varied and multiple assessments apporiate for student's learning in a personalized environment.

. The Applicant provided evidence that all students will have multiple and varied opportunities to mastery of standards through state-required assessments, district inititives and classroom standards. The district will provide students opportunities to progress and earn credit by providing a "seat time waiver" exam plan allowing students to progress on demonstrated mastery and seat time. Students are often allowed to choose several standards aligned to options that demonstrate mastery of content (computer or web-based tasks, use of remote devices for immediate feedback and other tasks as: portfolios, visual and oral presentations, written responses, peer teaching)

. The Applicant provided evidence learning resources and instructional practices adaptable and accessible to all students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Instructional materials will be available to schools in a variety of languages. The district's plan provides evidences of implementing personalized learning that will directly align with special education services to increase opportunities for students with disabilities to receive target learning for their undividual needs as outlined by their IEP's.

. The Applicant did not provide sufficient evidence of resources and instructional practices that will be used to expand and enrich English Language Learners achievement in the grant's personalized learning environment plan.

. The Applicant did not describe which strategies will be scaled up in addressing the progress in personalizing learning plans.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the principal's method of selecting teachers to the School Success Team and if teachers were give an opportunity to participate.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of provisions being made to ease the workload for teachers selected as model teachers.

. The Applicant did not provide clearity of the Central Office providing additional staff and then later deciding the use of their current staff.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant presents a plan that allows participation by students, parents, educators and other stakeholders access to necesary content, tools, and other resources both within and out of school and access to data for most parents outside of the school. Internet services are limited to families of four participating schools living in the southern end of the parish. To help alliviate this issue, the four schools provide additional opportunities for students and parents to access learning content, tools and internet outside of the school day by opening their school's computer labs before and after school hours and during the summer months.

. The Applicant provided evidence of participating schools receiving technical support by adopting a new system, Web-Based Diginal Learning Plateform, that will allow more access to information and programs for personalized learning plans and parents access to student data.

.Technical support will be available each school in the form of coaching and mentoring teachers, princpals and instructional staff . The district has received grant funding as a result of Hurricane Katrina to equip all of the classrooms with relevant instructional technology tools (interactive whiteboards, laptops, document cameras, sound systems) to prepare students for 21st Century Learning.

. The Applicant provided evidence the need of upgrading and intergrating the district's technology systems to be truly interoperable, however a plan was not outlined reflecting how to address implementing the school's use of the interoperable system.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant presented a feasible plan for the proposal's continuous improvement. The leadership teams at each school site will provide feedback on proceses, leadership and organizational practices. The Central Office District Team will meet bi-weekly to monitor effectiveness of the plan's proposed implementation strategies, track progress toward achievement of performance measures and communicate results to stakeholders. Semi-annual meeting for all stakeholders will be held and with online formats accessible to report the proposal's progress measures and quality of investments. Quarterly data meeting with students, teachers and leadership stakeholders groups will focus the school's improvements based on data results.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the plan being monitored for on-going reporting requirements, grant-related timelines, activities or providing a sound plan for having opportunities for on-going corrections and improvements during and after the grant funding.

. The Applicant did not provide a rigorous continuous process by creating strategies and tools to monitor the proposal's progress throughout implementation or how to address problem areas of the proposal that might arise in a timely and regular manner.

. The Applicant did not provide sufficient evidence of participating schools publicizing key information through multiple communication public vehicles.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

.The Applicant provides a reasonable approach for communicating and engaging internal and external stakeholders in the status and effectiveness of the proposal's activities and student progress toward performance targets in reaching the programs's goals and objectives. The various methods to communicate and engaged stakeholders regarding the proposal's development include: 1. Quartly published newsletters 2. Local newspapers 3. Quartly community reports and meetings 4. Posted district website updates 5. Semi-annually reporting to the School Board of Education. by the Project Director.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of plans to address stakeholders who may speak different languages and are able to access the information as well.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

. The Plaquemine Parish School District has identified 14 achievable performance measures to track both formative and summative indicators which includes annual targets, all subgroups, grade levels served, teachers, principals, number of participating students, academics (Math and ELA) and number of students on track to graduate. The measures provide timely and formative leading information related to the reform plan and theory of action for implementing success or or the proposal's concerned areas. The performance measures related to effective and highly effective teachers and principals are both ambitious and achieveable for all students.

. The Applicant presented a set of tables indicating student performance measures(Pre-12) that will be used in monitoring the success for this proposal. The tables represent state, district and classroom assessments.

. The Applicant did not provide sufficient evidence of how the performance measures will be reviewed and improved overtime if it is insufficient to guage the implementation progress and did not provide rationale for the performance measures or how the measures will provide a high plan theory of action.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant did not provide a comprehensive plan to evaluate the proposal's effectiveness of it's investments to bring about school improvements. A process has not been developed to determine if progress of the program's activities have been made using the grants's funds.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided an explanation of the budget which includes a listing of the requested grant funds of $5,167,588 with addtional funfing of $1,200,00 from the school district.

. The Applicant proposes a reasonable and cost efficient budget for this proposal. The applicant provided a comprehensive description of the funds that will be used to support the project's implementation. The specific funds are identified with reasonable funding allocations.

. The Applicant presented an overall budget summary that provides funding allocations of the grant followed by a budget narrative. For each projects that will be funded through the RTT-D grant , a detailed description of how the project's funding will be used is provided in the proposal's Budget Table 2-1 : Overall Budget Summary Project List.

. The Applicant did not provide a thoughtful rationale for classifying budget expenditures as a one-time or reocurring operationnal cost to support to support personalized learning environments.

. The Applicant's budget provided funds for personnel salaries however, the plan did not indicate hiring additional personnel.

. The Applicant provided only one project budget but the plan listed more than one project.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

.The Applicant provides a reasonable description of how it will sustain the project's goals. Plans are to utilize the district's five funding sources(Title 1, Title 2, Carl Perkins Donations, Chevon Corporation, General Operation Funds) to sustain the project after the grant period. The School Board of Education has agreed to provide expenses not covered by their funding sources to advance the goals of the project after the four funding of the grant.

.The Applicant provided a table that outlined the district's plan for the proposal's sustainability which includes activities undertaken, rationale for selected activities, projected timeline, deliverables and parties responsible for monitoring the sustainability of the proposal and actvities undertaken.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of the possible funding sources of the proposal's charted activities that would ensure a sustainable budget to support the goals beyound the grant funding.

. The Applicant did not address how the proposal's effectiveness of past investments will be evaluated and how the data will be used to inform future investment.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of an estimated budget for three years after the term of the grant that include budget assuptions, potential sources and uses of funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant did not address the Competive Preference Priorty.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

. The plan did not show strong evidence of how the participating schools will build on the core educational assurance areas to improve learning and teaching through personalization of strategies, tools, support of students and educators and the alignment with college-career ready standards and graduation requirements. The plan did not show a strong approach to address accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing the effectiveness of educators. The plan showed limited evidence decreasing the achievement gaps accross student groups and increasing rates at which students graduates from high school prepared forcollege and careers.

Total	210	115

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0202LA-3 for Plaquemines Parish School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As described in this section, the project appears to have potential to improve the education system; however, overall the project description lacks a comprehensive, high-quality, detailed design that indicates in-depth strategic planning has occurred and involved a broad group of internal and external stakeholders. A brief description is included to illustrate what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments; however, how this will differ from the current classroom environment is unclear. Three initiatives will form the foundation of the project based on child age groups: birth-grade 4, grades 5-8, grades 9-12. The LEA intends to adopt the Common Core State Standards which will be the cornerstone of the project. Students will combine academic and career development, with all students earning at least one "Industry Based Certification". It is unclear if this applies to all students or only career and technical education students.

As described, progress of students Pre-K through 12 will be continually monitored and interventions will be initiated as appropriate. Literacy and math proficiency will be emphasized and aligned to new, higher state standards. The data system will be improved and expanded, with student information easily accessible and available to educators and parents. Teachers and leaders will be trained to more effectively use data to inform instruction and change school culture. The new teacher and principal evaluation systems will be aligned to the personalized learning approach. Technology use to support instruction will be expanded. Summer academic camps will be available to prevent loss of knowledge and skills over the summer break. Based on their personalized learning plans, academic progress, and subject mastery, students who fall behind and require intervention will have access to several support options. Additional resources will be allocated to the lowest performing schools. How all of these project components will be linked and aligned to project outcomes is unclear, suggesting the plan may not produce expected outcomes.

Although a project plan is described that is intended to address the four core educational assurance areas, in this section the plan is generic and lacks an in-depth, cohesive, credible, high-quality design to accelerate student achievement. For example, the data system will be upgraded to support the project; however, not found is specifically what that will require. The new teacher and leader evaluation system will be improved, but details are not found that describe how that will differ from the current system, what is required to accomplish the task, and the expected outcomes for teacher and leader effectiveness.

Described is a partnership between the LEA and a community college that will deliver an accelerated program for "at risk students" to decrease the time required to attain a high school diploma and Associate degree. In general, at-risk students are categorized as lacking the knowledge, skills, social, physical, and/or behavioral norms to perform at grade level. How the applicant defines at-risk students in this context and how an accelerated program would benefit them is unclear. However, to address specific student needs and maximize resources, a partnership between a post-secondary institution and the LEA will likely have a positive impact on project efforts to improve college and career ready programs.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All seven schools in the LEA will participate in the RTT-D project, with an emphasis on addressing the highest-poverty schools, particularly those that are "rural, remote, economically depressed"; the schools meet the RTT-D eligibility requirements. One alternative school is not included. Schools were selected based on their need and a "united desire for district-wide effort to prepare all students for the 21st century." The LEA describes a wide gap in student growth, performance, and social problems between opposite geographical ends of the district due to poverty and geographic isolation, particularly after a natural disaster eight years ago. However, the LEA test and observational data, and data gathered from an "instructional capacity survey" supported the decision to include all schools.

The LEA will be adopting Common Core State Standards and intends to prepare all teachers and students districtwide for a successful transition. By including all seven schools, funding and resources investments can be maximized and strategies such as teacher collaboration can more effectively occur.

Provided is a list of the schools that will participate in the project, total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, and participating students who are high-need. All teachers and administrators at the seven schools will participate in project activities. Inclusion of all schools, students, and educators is more likely to be cost-effective, maximize resources, and eliminate the likelihood that the highest-need students and educators will be overlooked for specific interventions.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although information is provided in this section and criterion (A)(2) about the personnel investment and overall positive outcomes that are expected from successful implementation of activities and system reform, as described in this section the project is not a cohesive, coherent, innovative, detailed high-quality plan. The foundation of the project is reforming instruction to align with adoption of Common Core State Standards and building a data system that is sufficient to ". . . provide the information to make strategic and specific academic decisions." Not provided in this section is a logic model summarizing the project. The theory of change appears to be based on two reform measures: "Redesign curriculum and assessment system that prepares students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy" and "Building a data system that measures student growth and informs all stakeholders". The project will address all schools, students, and educators in the LEA; therefore, a plan to scale-up the project to address additional schools is not necessary. As described, the project may be successful; however, meaningful and ambitious reform success is difficult to predict based on limited information.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Assessment data is provided for the majority of student subpopulations, with generally reasonable and attainable goals for student progress and proficiency, dependent on the effectiveness of project activities and outcomes. Based on information provided to address this criterion and sub-criteria, as well as other information throughout the Narrative, it is difficult to predict a likelihood that project implementation will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall and by student subgroup. As described in this section and throughout the Narrative, a determination of "Basic" on state assessments is considered to be "Proficient". However, based on information the applicant provides that compares literacy and math scores, the majority of students districtwide are below proficiency when compared to Common Core State Standards, newly aligned PARCC assessments, and college and career readiness. The applicant states that the ". . . current status of [LEA] students looks quite bright as we have been very successful moving students to meet state standards as a district . . ." contradicts other information that indicates the state assessments based on state standards do not accurately reflect the actual proficiency of students, who as a general population lag behind in literacy and math. It is unclear why student limited English proficient summative assessment data is not available, which limits comparison of all student subpopulations.

Data that is collected and used to determine performance on state assessments, achievement gaps among student subpopulations, graduation rates, and college enrollment is available annually or at most three times per year. Data that is meaningful to inform instruction is more likely to support student and teacher success when it is available on a daily, weekly, or at minimum monthly basis; therefore, it is difficult to assess the impact on project interventions and assessments. However, the recent state adoption of a student growth model may mitigate some of the issues with gaps of time in data availability; data is not yet available on the success of the new growth model.

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

	Available	Score

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As described and based on data presented in this section, the applicant provides evidence of a record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Based on the data provided, achievement gaps among student subpopulations significantly narrowed from grades 4-8. Since 2010, the LEA state Department of Education rating increased from eleventh to fifth place. Although performance fluctuates up and down in the three highest need schools (one elementary, two high schools), their state performance scores increased overall from 2010 to 2012.

Student performance data is available to students, educators, and parents; however, the type of data and limited times it is available are unlikely to have a clear impact on student and school success. Specifically how the available data can be used to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services is inadequately described. Without a defined program for use of data by internal stakeholders and parents, support for students may not be achieved at the level anticipated.

Overall, a clear track record of success over the last four years is not described in this section. Ambitious and significant reforms in the LEA's three persistently lowest-achieving schools are not evident. Without a solid foundation of success on which to build, the project may not be achievable on time and within budget.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As stated in this section, posted on the LEA and state Department of Education websites are staff salaries, annual projected and actual budgets, a town meeting is held where stakeholders may comment, the meeting is available for review via a "local cable company", and copies of full financial audits are accessible on request. The system in place adequately addresses this criterion and sub-criteria.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As described in this section, the LEA appears to have adequate autonomy to implement a personalized learning based project. State law allows LEAs to ". . . create innovative courses and programs . . .", as well as substitute proficiency based courses for required "seat time" to meet the state requirement for a minimum number of minutes of classroom time. Although the autonomy does not appear to be broad, the LEA should be able to implement a program that includes, but is not limited to, proficiency based courses and online learning. Critical to project success and achievement of expected outcomes is autonomy to implement broad, diverse alternative student learning options, innovative and unusual teacher instruction, and administrator leadership that varies significantly from "business-as-usual".

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA is not a collective bargaining district; however, according to information provided and signatures of teachers from each participating school, more than 90% of teachers support the project. However, based on the list of stakeholders, absent from the RTT-D application decision-making process were teachers, parents representing parent organizations (e.g., PTA), and students. Included in the Appendix are letters of support from members of the 11 groups of stakeholders who were represented. Information is not included that explains the number of times the groups met, how stakeholders were informed of the process so they could be involved, and if the time(s) of the meeting(s) was scheduled to accommodate teacher, parent, student, and other stakeholder work schedules.

Lacking is information about the role external stakeholders (e.g., parents/families, business leaders, community organizations), will have in decision-making, project planning and modifications, and support of the project to ensure the four core educational assurance areas are addressed and expected outcomes are reached. A brief summary states that "Parents and students will receive specific training and ongoing support beginning in grade 5 and continuing through grade 12, on this process." Not found in this section is information on outreach programs to inform and engage parents, availability of technology to support parent access to the data system, and how training for parents will be conducted.

Project efficacy can often be dependent on parent/family engagement and removing barriers for those who are limited or non-English speaking, low-income, disenfranchised, or are faced with geographical barriers. The success of the project may be diminished if all stakeholders who want to participate in project decisions do not have the opportunity to do so.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**5**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As described in (C)(1)(a), it is unclear how the project will result in student understanding of the link between what they are learning as a key to their success and how that learning will enable them to accomplishing their goals. In addition to Career and Technical Education secondary options and industry based certification, the LEA will employ two instructional coaches to support traditional and CTE students. The applicant states that changes to new curricula will provide students with opportunities to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest and have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen their learning. Not included are descriptions of specific activities and opportunities aligned to expected outcomes. Other than a reference to after-school tutoring and summer camps to mitigate academic deficiencies, not found is a high-quality plan to engage and support students to master critical academic content and develop success skills and experiences that will prepare them to be successful in secondary and postsecondary courses, as well as careers. Barriers to success may emerge without a clearly defined, high-quality plan describing specific activities and benchmarks that will assist students to create their learning plans and revise them over time.

In section (C)(1)(b) an overview is provided of a multi-faceted program to provide students access to the LEA "published set of student learning targets" to guide the development of their personalized learning plans aligned to Common Core State Standards. Struggling students will have access to additional support and high-performing students will have access to digital learning coursework through dual enrollment courses. As described, high-quality instructional approaches and environments are broad and generic without specific activities that precisely define the students who will utilize them. The digital learning content is not described (e.g., specific courses, interactive collaborations, webinars, testing).

Ongoing and regular feedback will be provided with the improvement and expansion of the current data system. The applicant states that the student data and information needs to be updated and provide access to parents ". . . who do not have time or the knowledge to be able to assist students in this process." Not described in this section is a detailed plan of what is required to update the data system to address parent needs, provide training for parents to be able to assist their children, and how parent needs will be accommodated so they can be active participants in the education system. Not found is a plan to mitigate project barriers that may occur if the system takes more than a few months to upgrade, as well as how the time delay will impact student plans and progress, as well as achievement of project objectives and expected outcomes.

Provided is a list of how the current system is outdated and fails to address LEA, student, and parent needs. Not found is a detailed plan of action to mitigate the issues. "Students and families will receive training on the data systems" does not include information about additional opportunities for students and parents who cannot access the training during the once per quarter timeline, type of training available, tools students and parents need to access the training, and technical support that will be provided for them during and after training. Not found is a description how accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students will be developed and accessible, as well mechanisms that will be available to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

Overall, the information is generic without a coherent, clearly defined plan of action, realistic timelines to accommodate student and parent needs, and support strategies to enable students and parents to effectively engage in the project. Without a clear timeline and defined plan to ensure the data system is upgraded within a short timeframe, the project will experience delays and accessibility issues that question the feasibility of completion on time and within budget.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The state ". . . will shift away from a prescriptive curriculum to providing tools that help teachers make individualized decisions." This move by the state may provide the opportunity for the LEA to implement ambitious and achievable curricular changes that are personalized for students and teachers, ultimately positively impacting project outcomes.

The LEA will adopt the Common Core State Standards and align to them the curricula and assessment systems. Teachers will receive additional training in "identifying optimal learning approaches"; however, information is not found that they will be trained in use and alignment to CCSS of curricula, instructional delivery, and assessment. With CCSS as a foundation cornerstone of the project, unless teachers receive immediate and ongoing training in CCSS, it is unlikely they will be highly-effective within the grant period, which will negatively impact student growth and achievement, as well as their own teaching. Student and teacher development of personalized learning plans is dependent on thorough, in-depth teacher knowledge of CCSS and how to choose activities and assessments that will be aligned to each applicable standard.

The LEA provides incentives to attract highly-qualified teachers to hard-to-staff schools; however, evaluation data and insufficient program information is not provided; therefore, it is not possible to gauge the success of the program. Although the description is brief and somewhat generic, the applicant provides a summary of how teachers will be engaged in professional development activities and have the opportunity to engage in person or online with professional teams or communities. Curricula coordinators and specialists, in-class coaches, collaborative teams, and a "Teacher Tool Box" on the LEA website will provide teachers with support, self-evaluation mechanisms, and resources (e.g., standards, assessment strategies, setting goals). Teachers will be assigned to professional learning community teams that include post-secondary representatives. The teams will work to ensure that implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies will meet each student's academic needs and ensure coordination with college entrance requirements.

As described, improvement of principals' practices and effectiveness will include use of feedback provided by the teacher and principal evaluation systems, as well as coaching. The "Discovery Walk Program" for principals is referenced without an explanation in this section of what the program entails; therefore, it is not possible to assess its potential effectiveness and how it will impact overall project efficacy. Retired principals will be selected to provide coaching for current principals. Not found in this section is a selection protocol for the coach positions. For example, if a former principal was ineffective as an administrator, that individual would likely not be a good candidate as a coach.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA central office is staffed by ~75 employees who will take on the roles of the key project personnel. How the existing personnel will be trained and/or are qualified to govern, monitor, provide training, and assess the project is unclear. Not explained in this section is how these personnel will complete the additional workload the project will require. A six-person District Team comprised of current LEA central office employees and a representative from the university system will provide project governance and oversight. The current Director of Secondary Education will act as Project Director to oversee ". . . all grant activities, including reporting, budgeting, and progress toward meeting benchmarks, objectives, and goals." Not found is an explanation if or how the current duties will be shifted or assigned to other personnel in order to ensure adequate time is allocated for administration of the RTT-D project. As described it may be unrealistic to assign project duties to personnel already performing an existing job, thus negatively impacting the potential for success and sustainability of the project.

School Support Teams at each school will be comprised of 5-7 members from the school, including the teacher leaders and a curriculum specialist. Instructional coaches will work closely with the teams; however, it is unclear if they will also be members of the team. The school principal will select the members; however no criteria for selection are described. Teachers who voluntarily or are required to invest time, training, and a shift in paradigm in a new project, particularly one that is long-term (i.e., more than one year), are generally more enthusiastic and supportive of the project if they have clear guidelines how leaders will be selected and an equal opportunity with other teachers to be selected for a leadership role.

An overview of opportunities is included for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. For example, one option will be to earn credit through subject mastery and receive a course waiver. A "credit by exam" plan will also be implemented and coordinated with an existing online program that will be expanded to facilitate this option. The greater the number of alternative opportunities for students to succeed, the more likely they are to grow and achieve at expected rates, which supports successful project outcomes.

Students with disabilities and English language learners have specialized Individual Education Plans that will be modified to incorporate project strategies as appropriate. Blended learning formats, assistive technology, and student partners who speak the language will support these students. Not clearly described is whether or not these strategies will be new or a scale-up, improvement, or expansion of existing strategies. If they are existing strategies, collection and analysis of data to support scale-up may contribute to more efficient and timely project success.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All LEA schools are described as having classrooms fully equipped with technology; however, four of the high-need schools are lacking adequate technology infrastructure. Described are the barriers to student and parent access to home computers with Internet service. To mitigate some of the barriers, the schools are open extended hours and during the summer, and bus transportation is provided for students. Not found in this section is how the problems can be mitigated to remove all of the barriers and how the RTT-D project resources can be best utilized to ensure student and parent access. Without an ambitious and feasible plan to ensure access for these two stakeholder groups, they are unlikely to be able to take full advantage of project strategies.

Students and parents will have access to a parent portal that can be accessed via computer or cell phone. Student personalized learning plans and data will be accessible. Each school will have a Parent Learning Center available for parents without access to Internet service or cell phones. Parent Learning Centers are a positive strategy to improve the likelihood of project success.

Students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have appropriate levels of improved technical support through the creation of an interoperable data system, an integration of existing systems. Not provided is a substantive explanation of what activities and resource investments will be required to create the new system. Not included is a description how internal and external stakeholders will be informed of the new system, have access to various training options for its use, and how the data can best be utilized to determine student needs, growth, and achievement, as well as school progress. Unclear is how the new data system is expected to support all of the project objectives and outcomes.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**6**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Provided is a summary of the plan to implement a continuous improvement process intended to provide regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing modification and improvement during the grant period and post-grant. The new interoperable data system will provide immediate feedback on student progress and a means for administrators to "monitor student-learning trajectories". Timely, ongoing adjustments to teaching and professional

development activities can be implemented to best address teacher needs. When curricula has been redesigned and assessments aligned to Common Core State Standards, the District Team will meet twice each month to ". . . monitor effectiveness of the implementation of strategies . . . track progress toward achievement of performance measures, and communicate results to stakeholders." A twice annual report on progress measures will be published and data meetings with stakeholder groups will be held quarterly. The description in this section lacks clear, detailed information to sufficiently describe a high-quality plan to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of project investments funded by RTT-D. A multi-faceted information dissemination plan is a critical strategy for project success to ensure all stakeholders have frequent access to data, as well as grant and matching funds and resources return on investments. Stakeholders are more likely to support and participate in project activities when they are fully informed.

.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

An overview of an information dissemination plan is described that will include various venues and formats to ensure project progress is available to stakeholders. Community and school board meetings, the LEA website, news media, reports, brochures, and newsletters will be disseminated to reach a broad group of stakeholders. LEA and school websites will include curricula guides, assessment information, and instructional strategies. As described, the plan is a framework for development of a high-quality plan.

Not found in this section is a description how feedback from stakeholders will be solicited (e.g., public forums, online surveys, technical support hotline) and analyzed to inform the project team of positive and negative experiences that could potentially impact the project. For example, missing is a strategy to collect data on the number of website visitors, information they access, and technical issues for which they request assistance.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Required performance measures are provided in RTT-D tables, with some data based on estimates due to the limitations of LEA data systems. Annual increases in performance appear to be reasonable and feasible, particularly for a small LEA. Grade levels, specific assessments, and the rationale for assessment selection are provided for children birth through grade 12. In the table "Performance Measures", reference is made that student assessment data ". . . can be used as a student performance data component for teacher and administrator evaluation." A specific protocol for how the data will be used is not found.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed to determine project efficacy. Not found in this section is a high-quality plan that describes the evaluation protocol, specific summative and formative data that will be collected, and how data will be used to inform multiple project components including, but not limited to, strategy success, need for modification, student growth, effective use of technology, teacher effectiveness aligned to professional development, and return on funding investments. No reference is made to an external evaluator to create the evaluation plan and/or oversee data collection, analyses, and conclusions. Without a clear, coherent, detailed, empirical evaluation plan, the project will lack a critical component to effectively determine the success of the project and potential for scale-up and sustainability.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget includes both the RTT-D requested funds and matching funds of $1,200,000 (~18.8%) that will support the RTT-D project; Donations, General Operating, and federal Title I, Title II, and Carl Perkins. As presented in this section, the information is incomplete and confusing, thus it is difficult to determine if the budget is reasonable and sufficient to

support development and implementation of the project. The applicant states that there are ". . . six primary project and expenditure areas, for which the following budgets have been prepared." Only one project-level budget is presented; the other five budgets are missing.

In Budget Table 2-1: Overall Budget Summary Project List, the "Primary Associated Criterion" information is page numbers, rather than RTT-D criteria. It is not possible to determine precisely which criteria are referenced based on the page numbers; therefore, it is not possible to determine if funds and resources allocations are adequately aligned to RTT-D requirements. The cost basis for the majority of allocations is not found in this section; therefore, it is difficult to determine if the anticipated expenditures are realistic, adequate, and feasible to support project implementation during the grant period. For example, in the Travel budget category, " Travel will include one in state National Conference . . . Teachers and leaders will travel to state meetings . . ." does not include, at minimum, estimates of the number of people traveling, the name of the National Conference and how many other state meetings per year, in what location they might be held, and estimated per person costs for airfare and/or ground transportation, mileage, lodging, per diem, and other associated costs.

In the Supplies category, costs are generic and do not include any definitive information: "Supplies for day-to-day operation at 7 schools ($1000/7); supplies for PD (binders, paper, pens, highlighters- $1000); supplies for summer academic camps (manipulatives & instructional software- $3000 for 14 teachers); instructional material & supplies for redesigning curriculum and creating of assessments (content resource books, binders for students--(ELA & math for 6 schools, with instructional material for 800 students ($72,500)". Not provided are price quotes from vendors for specific day-to-day school operations, academic camps manipulatives and instructional software, and the rest of the supplies. The budget allocations may or may not be adequate to support the project; however, it is not possible to make that determination. The project may not be completed on time and within funding limitations without a detailed, itemized breakdown of costs; clear, precise, detailed allocations aligned to specific goals, objectives, and activities; and with estimated costs based on solid rationale and cost basis for expenditures.

One-time investments vs. ongoing operational costs during and post-grant periods are described in this section as ". . . expenditures are primarily based on contracts with outside partners and vendors. These contracts are designed to focus on one-time or grant-funding –period investments . . . to strengthen the existing administration leadership team; develop a cadre of teacher leaders, and empower personnel to continue to deliver the training and coaching within the district after the federal funding period ends." Post-grant the applicant intends to eliminate outside partners and vendors.

Long-term sustainability is based on several areas of maximizing investments, such as no additional staff hiring. "The present staff will take on extra duties associated with the grant as they know the strengths and weaknesses of the district; therefore, there would be no learning curve in implementation of the project. They would be provided a salary supplement for this work." As described throughout the Narrative, there will be a considerable amount of work to be accomplished during the grant period, including any unforeseen barriers and costs, time delays, and/or unanticipated time investments required. In a LEA that describes its human capital resources as currently inadequate to address the problems in the system, it is an unreasonable plan for current personnel to add additional duties to their workloads based on incentives to do so. There is not a guarantee that current personnel will accept the added workload, even when offered incentives. Although the applicant states there will not be a "learning curve" by current personnel, it is unrealistic to assume that even experienced, highly-qualified, and knowledgeable teachers and leaders will not experience some degree of a learning curve when developing and implementing a new project.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Multiple sources of revenue are included in the plan to sustain the project post-grant, such as federal IDEA, Title I, Title II, and Carl Perkins. Taxes, corporate donations, and braided funding are in place now and opportunities for donors and additional grant funds will be explored. Not described in this section is a contingency plan to replace funds that may fluctuate, decrease, or be eliminated during the project and post-grant. To rely on current federal, state, and local levels of funding over the next four years and beyond is unrealistic; therefore, a coherent, cohesive, aggressive sustainability plan that is initiated during the grant period may increase the likelihood the project can be sustained post-grant.

A table is presented in this section that does not appear to be related to sustainability. The timeline for activities and

deliverables begins August 2014 and as described, is unclear if the month and year for all of the dates are activities initiation, completion, or both. The responsible parties for all of the activities are predominantly the "District Team", with the majority of timeline dates listed as "August 2014". If the dates are initiation and completion, it is unrealistic to expect personnel to be able to successfully complete this new or additional workload in a one month time period. As presented, there is likely to be a negative impact on project progress and success during and post-grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The CPP is not addressed.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a project that is intended to improve student growth and achievement, teacher effectiveness, and principal leadership qualities. Overall, the project may have the potential for success. However, the Narrative is often generic without a clear, coherent, detailed, comprehensive program design that will successfully build on the four core educational assurance areas based on an identified track record of success and in-depth project planning. As described, project strategies and details appear to still be in the planning stage without feasible and realistic goals aligned to timelines, data informed outcomes, benchmarks, and budget allocations. Minimal information is included that describes in detail how multiple internal and external stakeholders have participated and will participate in all facets of the project. Not found is a solid plan to engage, involve, and support parents/families in their need for technology training, English language instruction, and access to support services (e.g., transportation, child care, technical assistance) to facilitate their ongoing involvement.

Student learning environments will be designed to improve student growth and achievement, teaching, and leadership through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards and graduation requirements. Descriptions of how teaching and learning will accelerate student achievement and deepen learning by meeting the academic needs of each student lack details about specific strategies that will address student subpopulation barriers. Not clearly defined are the specific courses that will be offered and expected outcomes for students (e.g., dual credit, pre-AP, AP, STEM, ELA, math). Not adequately explained is how and how often external stakeholders (e.g., businesses, non-profits, civic organizations) will support students through mentoring, internships, and summer academic programs.

Some information appears to be contradictory. For example, in the Budget Narrative the applicant states that no additional personnel will be hired as LEA employees and that existing personnel will be provided with incentives to carry an extra workload. In the Narrative, information states that new personnel will be hired as coordinators and coaches. The information is unclear whether or not these new hires are temporary consultants only during the project or LEA employees.

Mentoring for principals will be provided by former principals; however, an explanation is not found describing the qualifications and level of success the mentors will bring to the project. If the former principals were administrators of the lowest achieving or failing schools, the project is unlikely to be successful.

The Budget and Budget Narrative are confusing and, as presented, do not clearly align funding allocations for activities that are specific to project goals, objectives, and outcomes. The rationale and cost basis for itemized expenditures is

inadequate to assess the feasibility of successful project completion on time and within budget. Sustainability will rely on current federal, state, and local levels of funding over the next four years and beyond, which may not be realistic if levels of those funding streams decrease or are eliminated.

Total	**210**	**99**