



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0185ME-1 for Portland Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents ample information to show that the project is aligned with the current reform efforts by the district. The vision was developed based upon analysis from ongoing reforms in two of the districts school improvement grant schools indicating there were gains in student achievement. The outcomes of the reform identified promising practices to be used to scale up mathematics classes in all grades throughout the district; which is the clear goal identified by the applicant. The applicant has created the Math Transformation project which will be implemented in all schools within the district including low performing schools'. The applicant has logically aligned the project goals with those of the Race to the Top District proposal. The project's overarching goal is to raise student achievement in the mathematics through personalized instruction in all schools within the district.

Personalized classroom instruction is evident as the applicant proposes to incorporate college and career standards, and use data from formative assessments to create personalize instruction that supports and engages in mathematical concepts. The approach is centered around four key components that include: Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Coherence, Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning Opportunities, Family and Community Engagement and Math Transformation Project Plan all of which are the cornerstone to the applicant's approach. Students, teachers, and parents will develop personalized learning plans collectively and plans will be based upon academic interest and needs to deepen the students learning experience. Students will have the opportunity to experience extended learning opportunities through internships, job shadowing, community services, proficiency-based graduation and use of student data systems.

The Math Transformation Project will allow each student to monitor their own personalized learning plan to show progress towards achieving common core standards in math. This process will allow students and teachers to track and adjust personalized plans regularly. The Math Transformation Project is focused on closing achievement gaps and turning around low performing schools in math based on student proficiency and achievement levels through the use of professional development, technical assistance and promising practices identified from the school improvement grant. The Transformation School strategies are logical approaches by the applicant that will allow for the use of school-based Instructional Math Coaches who will develop classroom strategies for personalized instruction and will offer immediate progress feedback. Other logical supports include the use of School Improvement Support Teachers who will provide classroom support. Additionally, Common Planning Time will allow for team and individual classroom-based planning and training and a Collaborative Leadership process will help with capacity building in the schools for shared leadership around common goals in teaching.

The applicant does not describe what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments, therefore a score of 8 was given.

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

The applicant has targeted five of the lowest achieving schools for increased transformation supports. There is supportive information provided indicating that the schools are performing below proficiency in Math and most of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch, are socioeconomically disadvantaged and may have language barriers. For example, data from students attending Howard C. Reiche Elementary indicated that only 45% of students are meeting proficiency and 65% are socioeconomically disadvantaged. The applicant has presented a list of schools who will be participating in the grant activities. The applicant has provided the approximate numbers of students to be served by the project. Students are identified as high needs and low income as well. In addition to listing all students the applicant has listed the educators who will be associated with the project.

The Math Transformation Project implementation will focus on four key components: Aligned Curriculum & Instructional, Coherence, Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning Opportunities, and Family and Community Engagement. In order to achieve results in these four components, the district will develop a School Transformation Office to provide project-level support.

The applicant does not define the rationale for choosing the schools chosen for the project. There no specific information provided, therefore a score of 7 was given.

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

The information provided by the applicant to show there is a scale up process to reform the schools in the district is feasible. The process presented will assist low performing schools through the use of promising practices identified by the district reform initiative currently in place. The applicant describes the persons responsible for the activities to be used to implement the activities located in the work plan presented. The use of a Math Transformation Project work plan to implement and monitor the project is a reasonable approach and the strategies to be used are aligned with the Common Core Standards which support the scale up process. For example, he applicant indicates that all schools will report that 50% of the math lessons district wide will be aligned with the reform initiative by 2014 which will be implemented by the district and other stakeholders.

The applicant was not award full points for this criteria and was given a score of 7. The applicant has indicated that some schools will need more support than others and it is not clear how the work plan will address those schools who are in extra need of services specifically. The applicant does not the describe the goals or deliverables and the timeline presented is not detailed.

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

The applicant presents information to show the student proficiency status and growth will be measured in Math for grades 3, 5, 8 & 11. The use of the summative assessments specifically in Reading and Math to measure whether students are proficient or non-proficient is a logical approach to gauge academic progress. The process will include comparing student's beginning baseline assessment data to the end of the year assessment data collected to measure the student's achievement. The approach the applicant proposes to use is valid as the methodology is based upon the state's Comprehensive Plan and Common Core Standards which designates specific achievement scores between 0-80 by subject matter and grade level which is designed to monitor and measure student growth each year.

The applicant presents evidence to show there will be efforts made to reduce the achievement gap. For example, the applicant proposes to reduce the achievement gap by 8.9% and while increasing the graduation rates between by 3-4% per subgroups presented over the life of the proposal. The applicant proposes to use baseline data and compare it with the composite proficiency rate for each subgroup to determine gaps and then implement strategies to reduce the rate to 0%. This strategy coupled with project activities will support the reform initiative and project goals.

The applicant does not provide any graduation rates for the school years 2012-2013. However, the applicant predicts an increase in the graduation rate to 80% for the years 2014-2015. It is not clear if the projected increase is representative of a logical goal since there is no baseline data given to use as comparative data. The applicant does not provide baseline data for years 2013-2014 or through the life of the grant for college enrollment rates. Other key elements that were missing include the persons responsible for data collection and the timeline/frequency of data collection. Furthermore, the applicant proposes to reduce the achievement gap to zero by the end of the grant funding; this goal is overly ambitious and is not achievable based upon the baseline data presented indicating students are woefully behind. The applicant received Based upon the lack of information provided the applicant was given a score of 7.

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:

To show there has been a clear record of success, there is evidence provided by the applicant documenting an increase in reading proficiency rates (47.0% to 55.4%) and math proficiency rates (33.0% to 46.5%) in at least one school within the district, Riverton Elementary. There was also an increase in the daily attendance rate and decrease in behavior referrals and suspension rates. Additionally, another school, East End Community improved in reading/math and the staff have been empowered through the use of technology, evidence based programs, job-embedded professional development and stakeholder engagement. Reading proficiency has increased from 41.0% to 60.0% and math proficiency from 21.0% to 45.0%; this further indicates the district has had success in the schools presented. Collectively the growth rates increased in reading to 64.3% and math 52%, the progress is credited to the Rise and Shine enrichment extended day program.

Overall, the strategies implemented were successful in helping to reach goals set by the district. Some of the strategies included implementing block scheduling so students could gain longer instruction time in reading, writing and math, use of teachers and academic coaches to allow for more dedicated time and support for reading in math and technology across all grades. Parental involvement is evident through the parent academies whereby parents can become actively engaged through individualized student learning environments.

The applicant does not provide any specific information regarding four year progress pertaining to any other schools within the district. There is no information provided to show increased graduation rates or college enrollment. There is no information provided to show reform progress in low performing schools. Furthermore, there is no information provided to show if student performance data is made available to parents and students. The applicant does not provide any specific details regarding student learning outcomes or closing the achievement gaps. Due to the omitted information, a score of 7 was given.

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

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3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that financial data is readily available on the Department of Education's website and it is accessible to all persons who want to view the information. Furthermore, the applicant states that salaries, benefits and expenditures at the district level can also be found on the website. There is a Budget and Revenue Advisory Task Force comprised of parents and community members charged by the school board to examine the financial processes of the district and make recommendations for improvements in process and function.

This selection criteria was given a score of 3. The applicant does not specifically describe in detail whether the salaries on the websites are actual salaries listed or only overall school salaries located in the district. Furthermore, there is no information provided to show if non-personnel salaries are made available. Therefore, it is not clear if there is transparency related to salaries. There is no discussion regarding whether LEA's practices and investments are made available to the public.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There is some evidence presented by the applicant to show that state legislation, policies, procedures, and regulations supports autonomy and flexibility for local town and city government to implement law in ways that best fit their community. According to the applicant legislation states that students must have the opportunity to gain proficiency through multiple pathways and demonstrating proficiency through multiple types of evidence, key elements of a personalized learning environment. Therefore, implementation of personalized learning environments will not interfere with current or forthcoming legislation.

The states technology initiative, Maine's Laptop Technology Initiative (MLTI) provides every Portland middle school student with a tablet device and teacher with a laptop and mini tablet device. The MLTI program also allows the district to access additional student and teacher devices at significant discounts allowing the district to purchase devices expanding the 1:1 technology offers opportunities for high school students and teachers as well.

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

15

11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Stakeholder input is evident throughout the development of the project based on the information provided by the applicant. The project was developed with a long engagement process lead by a group of parent and community members. The process included community surveys, staff focus groups, community forums, and a community lead group that developed the final comprehensive plan framework. Furthermore, ample information is provided to show educators were also a part of

the process. Teacher unions, content area teacher leaders, building level leaders from district schools and district staff were gathered together to discuss the project and provided input based on the district's Comprehensive Plan. It is clear that the project is a collective effort by numerous stakeholders who created a plan to direct the vision, mission, and goals of schools for preparing all students to graduate college and career ready.

The applicant provides additional information to show there was stakeholder input through several letters of support for the project. Letters include support from the District Leadership Council (DLC), Superintendent, teacher association, senior executive team, district-level directors, and other key stakeholders within the district, business and community leaders. External stakeholders also support the project and some of them include the Portland ConnectED, a community organization of stakeholders who support education "cradle to career" for all people.

There is no evidence presented by the applicant to show there was input by students. It is also inferred by the applicant that parents were involved in the process but no specifics are given. Based on the lack of clarity regarding student and parental involvement a score of 11 was given.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the district is in the initial implementation stages of aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment in the area of mathematics. Students in a learning-focused system must be able to articulate the learning targets that they are working towards. Students will be pre- and post- tested to monitor and gauge feedback on progress. As students demonstrate proficiency their progress will be recorded in the student information system and be available in real-time for students, family, and teachers. The strategies presented by the applicant will ensure that students understand what they are learning to ensure they will accomplish their goals.

To show students will have access to digital learning concepts is evident. Students will have access to technology and have access to their own data to actively participate in setting, adjusting and attaining their personalized learning goals. The use of formative assessments to provide regular feedback to students and provide insight to teachers on instructional planning guidance is reasonable as this will allow for adjustments in the personalized learning process if needed and monitor progress. The use of the parent academy is a useful strategy which further supports the learning experience. The academy offers parents the opportunity to attend workshops that allow them the opportunity to learn course content and use teaching strategies at home to provide further support to students thereby broadening the personalized learning experience. Based on the omission of the information listed this section of the proposal received a score of 12.

A variety of approaches and instructional environments is presented by the applicant and include the use of Instructional Coaching to assist teachers in identifying available content-specific resources, instructional approaches and tiers of instructional support in order to create personalized learning environments. The use of the coaches is a logical approach as this process will ensure students meet identified benchmarks that assess college and career ready standards. Student progress toward standards is recorded in a Student Information System to provide real-time data to students, family, and teachers. To further show additional strategies the applicant has indicated that extended learning opportunities are available to students where they can participate in activities designed to develop math concepts, play math games, participate in common core academies that provide theme based instruction in literacy, math, science and technology and summer school will be offered. The approaches presented by the applicant will adequately support the goals and objectives of the project.

Additional supports for personalized learning environments are evident and include implementing a comprehensive student data system to support students in setting instructional goals, documenting progress, and measuring success. This data system will include components for teachers, students, and families to collaborate in a learner-centered approach which will clearly engage and motivate personalized learning for all students. In order to further facilitate student learning and participation in planning and tracking student learning, the district will implement district-wide distribution of 1:1 technology devices. Currently, students in grades 6-12, are issued iPads, all teachers are issued a laptop and a mini iPad, and all classrooms are equipped with projectors and Apple TVs. The 1:1 technology program has also been expanded to many K-5 classrooms. The Math Transformation Project will add 1:1 technology devices to the remaining classrooms within the district. This technology will put tools in the hands of students and teachers to allow for expanded personalized learning opportunities.

The applicant does not describe in detail how the proposed activities will ensure that students are career and college ready

or how the activities will allow students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. The applicant does not define how the project will allow access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that will motivate and deepen individual student learning. It is not clear how the project will allow students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant does not define in detail what mechanisms will be in place to train students to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them for use. There is no information provided to show how parents will be able to identify and pursue learning and development college- and career-ready goals or college- and career-ready graduation requirements to structure learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. Furthermore, there is no discussion regarding the high-quality strategies to be used to assist high needs students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. There is no timeline presented for the deliverables related to the activities presented.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is ample information provided by the applicant to show there are concerted efforts in place to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies to meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready. For example, the Content Area Teacher Leaders (CATL) reviewed the existing curriculum, assessments, standards, and teaching practices in order to make recommendations based on student-centered instruction for successful implementation of the states Common Core State Standards. The outcomes lead to the development of professional learning modules to be delivered to all K-12 teachers during the 2013-14 school year. There is also evidence presented to show that the process will be ongoing which will allow opportunities to monitor progress. This effort will be through the use of building-based teams of teachers who will spend three hours a month receiving training and resources in mathematics, technology, and instructional practices that will support the implementation of personalized learning environments. Another effective strategy is the use of school-based teams who will serve as the leaders in their buildings for the implementation of this project as the district builds collective capacity.

There is reasonable evidence provided by the applicant to show there is access tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Through the use of instructional rounds, Content Area Teacher Leaders and building team members established baseline data to be used to track teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness and practices was evaluated through the use of teaching modules and student assessments. The use of a math coordinator in each school was an effective way facilitate professional development and support staff in best practice in math instruction. Furthermore, the use of Instructional coaches who currently support the creation of personalized learning environments is a viable way to ensure processes and tools meet the needs of students. Other logical activities presented by the applicant include instructional strategies and modeling, co-teaching, and individual coaching of teachers will be continued and carried out by coaches at the building level. Additional instructional coaches in the program plan will continue to build classroom capacity to deliver best-practice instruction in math. School Improvement Support Teachers will serve as "floating teachers" in a school, allowing students to have uninterrupted learning time while classroom teachers work with instructional coaches.

Teachers will have embedded professional development time to engage in reflective practices geared to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies, interventions, and supports designed to increase the number of students graduating college- and career-ready. The strategies presented by the applicant indicates that there will be effective strategies in place to support personalized learning experiences, adapt content instruction and monitor student progress to ensure they are career and college ready and allow for the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

The information presented by the applicant to show school leaders and leadership teams will have what they need to provide effective learning environments is evident and will logically support the project. Through the use of instructional coaches develop and implement best practice lessons and units in math instruction educators will gain the skills needed to implement the project.

The use of teachers as consultants is reasonable and will further solidify the efforts of the project because they will work directly with classroom teachers to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments. These consulting teachers will be peer evaluators empowered to evaluate each teacher's progress toward the creation of effective

personalized learning environments, and the teacher will benefit from the consulting teachers' targeted feedback and support toward the goal of meeting all students' academic needs. It is further clearly indicated that teacher and principal evaluations are directly tied to the goal of meeting all students' needs through student-centered instructional practices. The evaluations will increase teacher's ability to meet student needs and will foster a culture of continuous improvement in both teaching and learning. Consulting teachers provide timely feedback and pertinent coaching that will enhance the classroom teacher's ability to implement personalized learning environments.

The applicant does not describe in detail how the processes presented will support hard-to-staff schools and support special education. There is no specific information to show the process to adapt content and instruction for students to engage in individually in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches. The applicant does not present any timelines associated with the proposed project activities. This section of the proposal received a score of 17 due to the omission of the information listed above.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sufficient information to show there is support for successfully implementing a process to scale up personalized learning practices to schools. The District's Chief Academic Officer (CAO) will oversee implementation of the Race to the Top – District grant. The applicant further presents a governance structure that includes the Academic Team, under the direction of the CAO, the Director of School Performance Management, Content Area Teacher Leaders, program coordinators, Special Education Director, Instructional Technology Director, Multilingual and Multicultural director, and the Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement. Positions include administrators and teachers in leadership roles, for example the Academic Team provides supports for schools' academic progress and will support the school transformation process. The District and the Academic Team will expand capacity for reform support through the hiring of a School Transformation Project Coordinator and Project Manager. These positions will provide tiered direct support to schools to implement project plans. The project will also hire an operations and finance specialist to work on the Academic and School Performance Teams to expand the personalized learning instruction and support in schools.

The plan to ensure the process for autonomy amongst leadership teams is comprehensive. School leaders will be given the authority and autonomy to implement promising practices in their schools once transformation takes place for the existing policies, procedures, and practices in the areas of finance and budget operations once things are in place. The hiring of the School Transformation Project Coordinator and Project Manager will allow school leaders to have additional support and accountability in expanding authority and autonomy. This is a logical approach to gaining autonomy at the school level because the positions will provide tiered direct support to schools to implement project plans. The applicant further presents a cadre of stakeholders who will support the autonomy process that include the District's School Leader Networks, PK-12 school leaders professional learning teams. Elementary, middle, and high school leaders who will meet regularly to analyze student achievement and growth data, share learning through successes, and collaborate to overcome barriers and challenges through professional Consultants. Members of the Academic Team will participate in these School Leader Networks to ensure adequate support from central office to leverage these professional learning teams in the transformation process. The School Leader Networks will be a key element in providing central office and peer support to school leaders in successful implementation of personalized learning environments through instructional rounds, Consultants, and facilitated improvement planning.

The District has adopted the Common Core State Standards, which expands proficiency-based progression across the District. Currently schools offer proficiency-based grading and reporting to support student progression and credit earning based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The use of various resources to allow students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways will be made available. All students in grades 6-12 currently have tablet devices, and technology is also made available in K-5 classrooms. Students are working on reinforcing concepts taught in the area of literacy, math and social skills. These devices significantly expand students' ability to build mastery as well as demonstrate mastery through a variety of formats matching a myriad of learning styles. Feedback from parents, teachers and administrators indicates that the technology has created daily-personalized learning experiences for students. The information provided by the applicant is adequate and does provide some approaches to be used to support efforts for students to gain the skills they need to achieve their goals.

Students will demonstrate proficiency through a system of formative and summative assessments. The use of assessment

data is a reasonable approach to support students, parents, and teachers in accessing and using the data to support personalized learning plans for students. These personalized learning plans will allow for demonstration of proficiency and gauge teacher effectiveness.

The applicant provides an adequate plan to provide learning opportunities for all students, parents and other stakeholders regardless of socio-economic status, language, race, ethnicity, or gender. All learning resources and content tools will be made available during school and during out of school time to support implementation of personalized learning environments. Support will include the use of translators and interpreters, written communications, family and community engagement professional development for staff, home visitation, school advisory councils, cultural brokers and more.

The applicant states that schools currently offer students the opportunity to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time but no specifics are given. The applicant further states a number of resources to allow students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways will be made available but little information is provided. The applicant does not discuss the learning resources and instructional practices that will be adaptable and to students with disabilities and English learners. This section was scored a 11 due to the omission of information not found.

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

There will be a concerted efforts made to ensure students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have the tools and resources needed in and out of school to support the implementation of the project regardless of income. The plan to allow stakeholders to be active participants in student learning is evident as the applicant proposes to provide school and community connections through leadership teams. The leadership teams will focus on addressing policy, infrastructure, and systems barriers that prevent family and stakeholder engagement. The strategies include family engagement events, removing transportation and childcare barriers, and empowering parents with in-home instruction aligned with classroom instruction. This logical approach will remove barriers that would otherwise prevent full stakeholder participation. To further strengthen parental involvement the creation of the Parent University programs, school advisory councils, family handbooks, and grade-level learning guides for families are all reasonable and logical approaches to ensure the project is successful. The goal to serve all students is present as there will be provisions made for multicultural students. For families with cultural or language difference the Multilingual Multicultural Office will provide support for these families to ensure they have the tools and resources needed to support them.

The applicant states that a data system upgrade will be made available for use by the project. The new system will provide support to parents and students learning progress, understand personalized learning goals, allow the student to demonstrate mastery and support real-time communication between home and school.

The applicant does not provide information to show how using information technology systems will allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and use the data in other electronic learning systems. The applicant does not provide any information to show how LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems to gain access to human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data. The applicant was given a score of 6 based on the omission of information noted.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The use of school-based data teams is reasonable as they will be able to support the continuous feedback process by meeting regularly to review student data and classroom practices. Furthermore, the district will conduct a culture and climate survey to inform goal setting at the school and district level. This is a reasonable strategy to further provide feedback to all stakeholders regarding each school's goals, objectives and mission based upon their individual needs.

The applicant presents a reasonable approach to implementing a continuous improvement process to support the project that includes the use of the School Performance Team who meet regularly to review project progress, budget, milestones, and data. The team will report its findings to the Director of School Management as well as sharing regular updates and problem solving through the district's Academic Team. This is a viable approach as the process will also provide opportunities for program adjustments if needed. The District will also make regular progress updates to the School Board,

which is made public to the community. Ongoing monitoring of student growth and achievement is evident and will be an essential element to measuring success, informing project plans to stakeholders. The School Performance Team and the School Leadership Network Learning Communities will monitor student populations and sub-group progress throughout the project.

The applicant does not present a timeline related to the activities noted. Furthermore, it is not clear who will be responsible for the data collection process. Because of the omission of this information this selection criteria was given a score of 11.

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

The applicant proposes continual communication and engagement for implementing personal learning environments district-wide and ultimately achieving success for all students and all schools. There are some logical strategies presented by the applicant to show there will be efforts made to ensure ongoing communication both internally and externally. For example, various leadership teams will be responsible for providing ongoing communications externally and internally. The teams consist of the Executive Team, District Leadership Council, School Administrator Professional Learning Groups, Academic Team, and School Improvement. This is a reasonable approach as the teams will work together to ensure they implement the District's Comprehensive Plan Framework and personalized learning environments. The cross-communication by teams is a viable approach which will allow teams to communicate with each other and external stakeholders to share program progress and information. The School Board that will also communicate with community partners, such as ConnectED, and publicly for families and community members.

The use of a School Advisory Council comprised of families and community stakeholders is also a logical approach to make sure external stakeholders are informed. School Advisory Councils will be updated regularly on project progress and given the opportunity to provide input and guidance to adjust planning and improve implementation throughout the course of the project. Data Systems and personalized learning practices to be implemented during the course of the project will help all stakeholders better understand and follow individual student goals, achievement, and growth. Ongoing access to the student data system by all stakeholders will increase communication and transparency of student performance and help direct each student's pathway to college and career. The use of parent universities and parent academies will allow parents to be actively involved in the student learning experience and allow opportunities for contiguous feedback

The applicant does not provide any specific information regarding timelines or milestones associated with the processes presented. For example, the applicant states that teams will meet regularly but nothing more specific is presented. This is the situation throughout the information provided by the applicant which is not representative of a high quality plan. This selection criteria was given a score of 3 due to the lack of clarity.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some performance measures for grades preK-3, 4-8 and 9-12. For example, it is indicated that performance on eighth grade math performance is one of the first indicators linked with graduation. The use of the School Climate Surveys of parents in all middle schools is a reasonable approach to gaining input to ensure performance measures are appropriate to support student needs. The survey includes indicators of parent and student engagement, respect, and support and baseline data will be collected in the Spring of 2014. For grades 4-8, there is reasonable information presented by the applicant to show the numbers and percentages of participating students by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator. The on-track indicator is a viable tool as it is aligned with the State's Common Core Standards and will allow continual monitoring of student progress. The applicant predicts an increases of 6%-11% for student achievement especially in the areas of math for all students over the life of the grant. The increases presented are logical based upon the current proficiency rate of the students in the targeted schools. The applicant provides the number and percentages of students in grades 9-12 who will complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Furthermore, the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator is also presented. The inclusion of this information further provides insight regarding the needs of subgroups of the students in the targeted school.

There are no specific activities or rationale associated with the performance measures presented. The performance measures are not specific or represent a rigorous or timely approach and there is no proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. The applicant does not provide a timeline or specific deliverables associated with the performance measures presented. The

The applicant does not present the minimum number of performance measures; only 10 performance measures are provided for subgroups preK-3, 4-8 and 9-12 and only 4 of the 10 are detailed. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide any age-appropriate non-cognitive indicators (e.g., physical well-being and motor development, or social-emotional development) of growth for grades pre-K-3. For grades 4-8, the applicant does not provide any grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicators. There is no information presented for grades 9-12 regarding any measures for career-readiness in order to assess the number and percentage of participating students who are or are on track to being career-ready and there are no grade-appropriate health or social-emotional indicators presented. The applicant does not describe the process to review and improve measures over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. The applicant has not provided detailed information for several of the subcriteria in this selection criteria, therefore the score of 2 was given.

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

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented some information to show there will be efforts made to evaluate the effectiveness of the Race to the Top District funded activities such as professional development. The majority of costs for the project is geared towards personnel and the hiring of implementation specialists to support the project. The hiring of specialists to support teachers is a reasonable approach to monitor teacher quality and classroom instruction. The specialist are experts in classroom instruction and assessment to provide the professional development support necessary to scale up the skills of educators' district-wide. This approach is an appropriate process which will help to create capacity building across the district thereby creating a good workforce and sustaining the project. Further appropriate strategies include investments in technology and data systems district-wide which will allow more access to 1:1 technology devices to further support professional development. The plans are reasonable and include updating old equipment and putting support systems in place. Supports will include the use of the School Transformation Coordinator, Manager, and Account Specialist; along with the Academic Team and School Administrator Professional Learning Groups who will document investments and results throughout the projects.

The applicant does not provide a timeline and does not present any activities associated with the processes listed above. Based on the lack of information this section was given a score of 3.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant presents a budget that will reasonably support the implementation of the project. There are funds identified that will support the project and the applicant has identified all funding that will be ongoing and/or one time support at the federal, district level and local levels. There are clear descriptions of the how funding will be used and the expenditures for program supplies, equipment and salaries associated with the project services are reasonable line items. For example, the applicant proposes to use funds for the School Improvement Support Teachers who will be assigned to provide continuity of instruction for students while teachers are released to do common planning, collaborative learning and professional development activities.

There is not enough money earmarked in the budget for professional development. The applicant has presented a budget of over 19 million dollars with over 14 million dollars earmarked to hire personnel and the applicant has budgeted 200,000 in years 2-4 for professional development. This is not logical as the majority of the project implementation is based on providing professional development and training for teachers. Based upon the weakness identified this selection criteria received a score of 7.

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

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6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a reasonable sustainability for the program to show the district will maintain the resulting transformational changes beyond the program period. The data and technology investments are detailed and represent one-time, up-front investments that will be maintained long term by the district and the implementation of a new student data system will reduce the cost of repairs and technical support. Once the initial expense is supported, existing resources dedicated to the current ineffective student data system can be utilized to maintain the new system. This process is logical

as it will allow staff to gain student data information in a timely matter so that they will be able to dedicate their time to improving personalized learning environments. By having a more efficient data system that no longer requires constant technical and support personnel, instructional technology staff time can be freed up to dedicate towards supporting technology integration in classrooms. This more efficient student data system will also reduce the time teachers need to dedicate towards collecting; tracking down, and analyzing separate student data information. This time, instead, can be dedicated to informing and improving instructional practice.

It is not clear how the sustainability plan will be evidenced through the investment in personnel and the implementation specialists to be hired for the project as indicated by the applicant. Staff may not be provided sufficient professional development opportunities based on the budget presented. The applicant does not discuss the evaluation process to evaluate the outcomes to inform a post grant budget. Furthermore, there is no estimated budget provided for the three years after the term of the grant, budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds. This selection criteria was given a score of 6 due to omission of the information noted.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence to show partnerships are in place and their commitment to the project through letters of support. The school district, city, local university, targeted schools and public agencies are all partners who will support the proposed project. Several population-level desired results for students in that are aligned with and support the applicant's broader Race to the Top District proposal are presented by the applicant and includes the providing educational strategies that will increase student proficiency in math so that students will be able to progress academically and graduate. Personalized classroom instruction is evident as the applicant proposes to incorporate college and career standards, and use data from formative assessments to create personalize instruction that supports and engages in mathematical concepts. The approach is centered around four key components that include: Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Coherence, Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning Opportunities, Family and Community Engagement and Math Transformation Project Plan. Students, teachers, and parents will develop personalized learning plans collectively and plans will be based upon academic interest and students will have the opportunity to experience extended learning opportunities through internships, job shadowing, community services, proficiency-based graduation and use of student data systems. Family and community supports are evident as parents will have the opportunity to attend parent universities and workshops to gain the resources and tools needed to provide student support. Leadership teams will be made available internally and externally to provide support to all stakeholders at the district and state levles. Students will demonstrate proficiency through a system of formative and summative assessments. The use of assessment data is a reasonable approach to support students, parents, and teachers in accessing and using the data to support personalized learning plans for students. These personalized learning plans will allow for demonstration of proficiency and gauger teacher effectiveness. Opportunities are presented by the applicant to show a continuous improvement process will be implemented and includes the use of the School Performance Team who meet regularly to review project progress, budget, milestones, and data. All milestones will be reviewed to make sure the project is on task. The team will report its findings to the Director of School Management as well as sharing regular updates and problem solving through the district's Academic Team. The district will also make regular progress updates to the School Board, which is made public to the community. Ongoing monitoring of student growth and achievement is evident and will be an essential element to measuring success, informing project plans to stakeholders and will support revisions, as necessary. The School Performance Team and the School Leadership Network Learning Communities will monitor student populations and sub-group progress throughout the project. The strategies presented by the applicant will support continuous data analysis for program improvement. he applicant provides an adequate plan to provide learning opportunities for all students, parents and other stakeholders regardless of socio-economic status, language, race, ethnicity, or gender. All learning resources and content tools will be made Vacaville during school and during out of school time to support implementation of personalized learning environments. Support will include the use of translators and interpreters, written communications, family and community engagement professional development for staff, home visitation, school advisory councils, cultural brokers and more.

The applicant provides sufficient information to show there is support for successfully implementing a process to scale up personalized learning practices to schools. The district's Chief Academic Officer (CAO) will oversee implementation of the Race to the Top – District grant. the applicant further presents a governance structure that includes the Academic Team, under the direction of the CAO, the Director of School Performance Management, Content Area Teacher Leaders, program coordinators, Special Education Director, Instructional Technology Director, Multilingual and Multicultural director, and the Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement. Positions include administrators and teachers in leadership

roles, for example the Academic Team provides supports for school's academic progress and will support the school transformation process. The district and the Academic Team will expand capacity for reform support through the hiring of a School Transformation Project Coordinator and Project Manager. These positions will provide tiered direct support to schools to implement project plans. The project will also hire an operations and finance specialist to work on the Academic and School Performance Teams to expand the personalized learning instruction and support in schools. The use of a School Advisory Council comprised of families and community representatives will provide ongoing feedback and input to schools through the implementation of the personalized learning environments. School Advisory Councils will be updated regularly on project progress and they will be given the opportunity to provide input and guidance to adjust planning and improve implementation throughout the course of the project. School Advisory Council members provide information on the vision, mission, goals, activities, and successes with other families and the community as district-wide support and engagement in the school transformation process. Data Systems and personalized learning practices to be implemented during the course of the project will help all stakeholders better understand and follow individual student goals, achievement, and growth. Ongoing access to the student data system by all stakeholders will increase communication and transparency of student performance and help direct each student's pathway to college and career. The use of parent universities and parent academies will allow parents to be actively involved in the student learning experience and allow opportunities for contiguous feedback. The performance measures presented by the applicant are achievable.

The applicant does not discuss specific partnership goals for improving the education and family and community supports. Furthermore, there is no specific discussion regarding the plan to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports. The applicant does not present the minimum number of performance measures; only 4-6 performance measures are provided for subgroups preK-3, 4-8 and 9-12. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide any age-appropriate non-cognitive indicators (e.g., physical well-being and motor development, or social-emotional development) of growth for grades pre-K-3. For grades 4-8, the applicant does not provide any grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicators. There is no information presented for grades 9-12 regarding any measures for career-readiness in order to assess the number and percentage of participating students who are or are on track to being career-ready and there are no grade-appropriate health or social-emotional indicators presented. Based upon the omission of the information noted this selection criteria was given a score of 7.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents ample information to show that the project is aligned with the current reform efforts by the district. The vision was developed based upon analysis from ongoing reforms in two of the districts school improvement grant schools indicating there were gains in student achievement. The applicant has created the Math Transformation project which will be implemented in all schools within the district including low performing schools'. The applicant has logically aligned the project goals with those of the Race to the Top District proposal. The project's overarching goal is to raise student achievement in the mathematics through personalized instruction in all schools within the district.

Personalized classroom instruction is evident as the applicant proposes to incorporate college and career standards, and use data from formative assessments to create personalize instruction that supports and engages in mathematical concepts. The approach is centered around four key components that include: Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Coherence, Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning Opportunities, Family and Community Engagement and Math Transformation Project Plan all of which are the cornerstone to the applicant's approach. Students, teachers, and parents will develop personalized learning plans collectively and plans will be based upon academic interest and needs to deepen the students learning experience. Students will have the opportunity to experience extended learning opportunities through internships, job shadowing, community services, proficiency-based graduation and use of student data systems.

The Math Transformation Project will allow each student to monitor their own personalized learning plan to show progress towards achieving common core standards in math. This process will allow students and teachers to track and adjust personalized plans regularly. The Math Transformation Project is focused on closing achievement gaps and turning around low performing schools in math based on student proficiency and achievement levels through the use of professional development, technical assistance and promising practices identified from the school improvement grant. The Transformation School strategies are logical approaches by the applicant that will allow for the use of school-based Instructional Math Coaches who will develop classroom strategies for personalized instruction and will offer immediate progress feedback. Other logical supports include the use of School Improvement Support Teachers who will provide

classroom support. Additionally, Common Planning Time will allow for team and individual classroom-based planning and training and a Collaborative Leadership process will help with capacity building in the schools for shared leadership around common goals in teaching.

Total	210	144
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0185ME-2 for Portland Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The vision outlined in response to this criteria builds on work in the four core assurance areas:

- The Portland Board of Public Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2012. Math assessments will be aligned to CCSS with complete implementation of the assessment plan establishing grade level expectations for regular and ongoing formative and summative assessments. The vision for the district RTTD Math Transformation Project includes the development of mathematical-focused personalized learning plans (PLPs) and goals. The Math Transformation Project will allow each student to monitor his/her PLP and goals and indicate progress toward achieving Common Core Standards in math which meets the requirements for this assurance area.
- Portland Public Schools (PPS) uses a student data management system that has limitations, making access to important data slow and unwieldy. Individual teachers have access to assessment data, behavioral information and other data points. However, the system is not aligned to the CCSSs and lacks the ability to interface with other systems. School leaders and leadership teams must pull data from multiple sources in order to monitor a school's progress toward helping all students achieve rigorous academic standards. The Math Transformation Project would upgrade the data system allowing students, teachers, and parents to have the ability to use customized dashboards to routinely track progress and make timely, data-based adjustments to their learning and choices to ensure they meet their personalized learning goals. This is appropriate to provide stakeholders the ability to access the information they need to meet the goals of the project.
- The applicant cites high quality, ongoing, embedded professional development as a strategy for recruiting and retaining teachers and leaders. Professional development tied directly to student data and evaluation systems indicators, peer coaching for instructional and leadership staff and common planning time to foster collaborative leadership and instruction are important steps in increasing educator effectiveness and retaining them. The plan provides for recruiting new, school-based instructional math coaches and school improvement support teachers, a feasible approach to a math improvement plan.
- The district mapped promising practices from two schools that made significant progress on student performance and closing achievement gaps from practices implemented through a School Improvement Grant (SIG) and plan to implement them district-wide. The Math Transformation project is designed to provide extra math supports to the lowest performing schools, a step in addressing this assurance area.

b) The vision cites a number of strategies for extending and deepening student learning including internships, job shadowing, community service opportunities based on personalized learning goals and areas of academic interest. To accelerate student achievement, strategies such as proficiency-based graduation, extended school day and year, use of the data system to provide timely student data to inform improvement and the capacity to record and connect extended learning opportunities to student personalized learning plans, are included. These are all quality approaches for meeting goals.

c) The applicant describes a vision of a classroom where students design personalized programs of study that are aligned

to college and career standards, where they, along with their teachers, use data from formative assessments to personalize instruction on mathematical concepts and connections, where their families are engaged as partners in learning and the community is their extended classroom. Details are missing to show what the classroom setting and activities would be like for students and teachers in order to accomplish these goals.

The score for this criteria is at the low end of the high range due to the quality of the reform vision but a lack of detail in describing what the classroom experience would be like for students and teachers.

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

a) The applicant provided a description of the process used to select schools to participate. A two tiered process is described with implementation of the project in the schools with tier one and two schools exhibiting the lowest performance and lowest growth rates by subgroup including lower achievement in ELL, SES and SPED student populations. However all schools will receive some intervention through the project. The schools selected for the deeper intervention are listed with current data in the areas listed above. The school selection meets the competition's eligibility requirements and the information provided meets this criteria.

b & c) The application lists and describes schools participating in grant activities in the narrative and lists schools in a demographic table with total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators. The table includes percent of participating students in the schools (100%), percent of participating students from low income families, and percent of total LEA low-income population. This meets the criteria for this section.

The score for this section is at the highest level due to the quality of the implementation approach and the data supplied to meet the criteria.

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

A high quality plan is well described in the narrative and the tables provided in the appendix with key project components, strategies, activities/milestones, and persons responsible for the target school implementation. It is arranged by key components of the project which are project level support, aligned curriculum and instructional coherence, student data system, extended learning opportunities, and family and community engagement. It is detailed enough to provide a clear description of the project.

The plan includes all district schools in the Math Transformation Project through a tiered level of support which is a process of scaling up to all schools during the grant period, with most low-performing schools receiving services first. Built on successes and lessons learned from School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, the rationale for the approach adopted is that some schools need more support than others in achieving personalized learning environments for students. In addition to the detailed project workplan provided, a project vision is laid out in a tabular format with the overarching project goal of all students meeting or exceeding proficiency in math on top and the aligned key components with *all school strategies* and *transformation school strategies* listed under each component. The plan is well designed for improvement of student learning outcomes, however, information is not provided on how decisions will be made to shift resources from one school to another to avoid withdrawing supports before transformation is complete.

The score in this section is at the low point of the high level due to the high quality of the plan but with no clear description of the decision-making process to move supports to the next phase.

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

a) The annual goals provided in the application for improved proficiency numbers and growth targets for proficiency on summative assessments seem ambitious, yet achievable especially on the math assessments since the Math Transformation Project aligned to CCSS is designed to improve student learning as measured on the state assessments.

b) The annual goals provided in the application for decreasing achievement gaps to 0%, while laudable, seem likely to be overly ambitious and unlikely to be achieved by the end of the grant period due to the multiple factors contributing to these gaps especially poverty and disabilities. However, progress can be made in reducing the gaps with this type of intervention during the grant period.

c) The annual goals for graduation rates are provided, however, it is not clear how they were calculated. Some goals seem ambitious yet achievable, some are ambitious and seem unlikely to be unachievable, and some are not ambitious but achievable. Those that seem most unlikely to meet the criteria are Special Needs with a baseline of 49% and a post grant rate of 84% and LEP with a baseline of 73% and a post grant rate of 77%.

d) The annual goals for college enrollment are not responsive to the metrics for this criteria due to a lack of data/annual goals for subgroups and missing targets for the years 2013/14 through 2016-17 for the Overall group.

The score for this criteria is at the lower end of the mid-range due to missing information to explain what seem to be unrealistic annual goals, missing targets for some years and missing subgroup data for college enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) No evidence is provided of four years of improvement in high school graduation rates and college enrollment as well as increasing equity in learning and teaching.</p> <p>b) The applicant describes significant gains in reading and math at the district schools participating in the SIG grant, however, four years of data is not provided. It is not clear how SIG strategies will be implemented in other schools.</p> <p>c) The district's current data system has an early warning system formula to better identify struggling students. The narrative mentions teachers and administrators having access to the current system, but no there is no mention of access for students and parents. The system is slow and unwieldy and is not aligned to CCSS. It is mainly a repository for common district assessments, state assessments, report card, and behavioral data forcing educators to go to multiple sources for data to monitor progress on the standards. RTTD grant funds would be earmarked for a data system with functionality to provide real time data to educators, students and parents and allow the use of customized dashboards. Importantly, the applicant understands the importance of a new system to make improvement goals a reality. This meets the criteria for this section</p> <p>.The score for this criteria is in the middle range due to a plan to create a more functional data system but missing information on four years of a clear record of success in advancing student learning and lack of information on implementing SIG strategies in other schools.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant cites plans by the State of Maine to increase district-level financial transparency at the school level, however, it is not clear whether the information will be provided in the categories required in this selection criteria. The financial data for all State of Maine school districts is available via the Department of Education website. Any interested stakeholder can access financial reporting by school and by category at any time. The district exceeds transparency requirements due to the fact that State of Maine law requires community approval of school budgets through referendum each year. The district makes available to the public both district and school level budget allocations throughout the budget development and approval process. Appropriately the most recent budget book can be found on the district web page.</p> <p>The score for this section is at the high level due to the high level of financial transparency provided but lack of information regarding making public financial information by required categories at the school level.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Comprehensive evidence is provided to prove successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements exist to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. The regulatory environment supports the type of initiative proposed by the applicant's Math Transformation Project. Examples, with documents provided in the application appendix, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All state legislation, policies, procedures, and regulations have as a central theme autonomy and flexibility for local town and city government to implement law in ways that best fit their community. • In 2012, the State enacted LD 1422, An Act to Prepare Maine People for the Future Economy, also commonly referred to as the "proficiency-based diploma law". This law supports the implementation of personalized learning environments. • LD 1858, An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership legislation, requires all districts to develop and implement a teacher and principal evaluation system that includes student growth and achievement. • In 2012 Maine State Education Commissioner Steven Bowen released "Education Evolving: Maine's Plan for Putting Learners 		

First". In this document he describes empowering schools to create education systems that meet the needs of all learners and prepare them for college, career, and civic life. This aligns with the district's program plan.

- The State of Maine's Laptop Technology Initiative (MLTI) provides every Portland middle school student with a tablet device and every middle school teacher with a laptop and mini tablet device. The MLTI program also allows the district to access additional student and teacher devices at significant discounts allowing the district to purchase devices expanding the 1:1 technology opportunity to all high school students and teachers as well. Technology devices are essential tools for supporting a personalized learning environment.

The score for this section is at the highest point due to the compelling evidence provided to meet the criteria for this section.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a) According to the applicant this grant application was assembled with representation from the teachers union, content area teacher leaders, building level leaders from district SIG schools and district staff. There is no mention student and/or parent involvement in creating the application or revising it. The plan is based on the district Comprehensive Plan created in a long process led by a group of parent and community members. The District Leadership Council (DLC), a cross section of district staff members providing direct consultation to the Superintendent on planning and district-level decision-making is supporting the plan. Members include representatives of the Portland Education Association, Portland Administrators Association, the Educational Technicians Association, and the BASE Association, a group representing secretaries, maintenance, and other support staff. Additional members include the senior executive team, district-level directors, and other key stakeholders within the district. It is not clear how the proposal was revised based on feedback, however, the broad-based collaboration described in the application appears to meet this selection criteria

b) Letters of support and partnership are included from a range of stakeholders including the mayor, legislators, parents, community-based organizations such as United Way and the public library, members of the business community, advocacy groups and local institutions of higher learning. These letters indicate ongoing relationships with many of these groups which is a strength of the plan to engage the community in support of personalized learning and the Math Transformation Project.

The score for this section is in the high range based on the strong level of support from stakeholders but missing information on how the proposal was revised, whether students and parents were included and whether the teachers involved were from participating schools

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan is provided with an explanation of the components in the narrative and project components, strategies, activities/milestones, persons responsible for each activity and a detailed timeline found in the appendix.

- a)
- i & ii) The plan for personalized learning in the district includes having students understand learning goal-setting activities and track progress regularly. Pre and post assessments are used along with formative assessment to measure progress toward benchmarks based on the CCSS. As students demonstrate proficiency their progress is recorded in the student information system (SIS) available to students, families and teachers. A vignette is provided from a teacher explaining how the process works at her school where all students are divided into crews. They set goals and update goals in weekly crew meetings. However, It is not clear from the plan provided how the aligned curriculum is linked to achievement of college and career readiness goals.
 - iii) The district is implementing extended learning times for students and have piloted it across the district. In order to have strong student engagement for effectiveness high interest science models have been used and are successful at integrating math concepts and written communication. The use of technology devices such as iPads in a 1:1 classroom environment expands the personalized learning opportunities. This is a feasible approach to meeting the criteria.
 - iv) The district student population is highly diverse. While understanding the challenges involved in meeting the learning needs of such a diverse population, the district seems to have embraced the diversity and provided opportunities for parents to be

involved in the school community. One example is the School Advisory Council structure that is made up of families representing the diversity of the school community, as well as organizations, businesses, and other community members. Parent Academies at all schools are slated for the project with interpreters available to assist parents in supporting their students at home. One of the district's core principles is "We support an organization that celebrates and partners with the diverse culture of our community." Additionally the district comprehensive plan format includes a strategy that calls for implementing a K12 global literacy curriculum based on the CCSS. The information provided indicates the district culture and approach to learning meets the criteria.

v) The personalized learning environment described in the application is focused on students mastering critical math content. Personalized learning plans with goals, which are at the heart of this project, would allow students to monitor the plan and goals to indicate progress toward meeting CCSSs. Programs implemented at some schools as part of the SIG have focused on traits such as creativity and teamwork. The extended learning time programs have learning opportunities built in to develop skills and traits necessary for success. These student opportunities meet the criteria for this section.

b)

i) The plan appropriately provides for instructional coaches who will assist teachers in identifying available content-specific resources, instructional approaches and tiers of instructional support in order to create personalized learning environments to ensure students meet identified benchmarks assessing college and career standards. This type of support is necessary to ensure teacher effectiveness.

ii) The plan provides for high quality instructional approaches and environments such as the extended learning environments for remediation using engaging science modules to integrate mathematical concepts and written communication. Enrichment opportunities such as debate, robotics and writing group are incorporated into some extending learning time environments. Common Core Academies for grades 1-5 provided theme-based instruction on "Flight" integrating literacy, math, science and technology. There were "must do" and "may do" learning activities for personalized learning. Workshop model teaching, Expeditionary Learning and the Johns Hopkins Talent Development model are other examples of approaches in use in the district. This is a strong plan for meeting project goals.

iii) Though the applicant plan includes content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support implementation of personalized learning environments there is scant information to determine the quality of these resources.

iv)

A) The plan provides a reasonable approach to ensuring that ongoing and regular feedback will be provided to students with an updated data system through pre, post and formative assessments recorded in the student information system and available in real time in order to use the data to actively participate in setting, adjusting and attaining their personalized learning goals.

B) As teachers identify the content-specific resources, instructional approaches and tiers of instructional support in order to create personalized learning environments to ensure students meet college and career standards, middle school is piloting a proficiency-based platform to use as a component of the student information system. This is a feasible approach to creating an automated system to track student progress.

v) The plan is focused on accommodating high-needs students in a variety of ways. Extended learning time, Language Enrichment academies for English learners, and support for parents to help their students at home are a few of the strategies the district employs to accommodate these students. The entire Math Transformation Project will target these students along with others to increase math proficiency with a variety of strategies implemented through the personalized learning environments. The plan seems well designed to improve the on-track status of these students.

c) The plan provides for the Instructional Math Coaches and a Student Data Support Specialist to support students, parents, and teachers in accessing and using the data to support personalized learning plans for students, a feasible approach.

The score for this section is at the low point of the high end based on the quality of the plan but lack of detail in describing how the plan will link the aligned curriculum to achievement of college and career readiness goals and missing description to determine quality of learning resources.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)**20****19****(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

a)

i & ii) The district created content area lead teacher positions to review existing curriculum, assessments, standards, and teaching practices, and make recommendations based on student-centered instruction in order to implement the CCSS. All K-12 teachers will be trained in building-based teams and spend three hours a month receiving training and resources around CCSS in mathematics, technology, and instructional practices. The application describes job embedded professional learning activities for educators in support of personalized learning including training and coaching on new math curriculum and instructional strategies to implement personalized learning environments, including extended day and hours for professional development time. The plan provides for Instructional Math Coaches, a new school-based support position to develop classroom strategies for personalized learning, and integrate instructional strategies and curriculum around CCSS implementation. Strategies support personalized learning plans for students. Teachers, related instructional staff, and family members will understand the strategies needed to help each child succeed and will have the resources to put those in place. The plan includes School Leader Networks Learning Communities, professional learning communities for school administrators, clustered by K-12 vertical alignment of schools, focused on improving professional practice based on student growth and achievement data. Personalized learning plans for students. This robust system of professional learning and support are well designed to build capacity for educators to meet these criteria.

iii) Student assessment data will be housed in the district's enhanced Data System and the Instructional Math Coaches and Student Data Support Specialist will provide assistance in using the data to support personalized learning plans for students, allowing for demonstration of proficiency at multiple times and in multiple ways. Consulting teachers will be empowered to evaluate each teacher's progress toward the creation of effective personalized learning environments and provide targeted feedback and support toward the goal of meeting all students' academic needs. This is a reasonable approach to meet the criteria.

iv) Appropriately, the new teacher evaluation system in the district (TEVAL) is based on Charlotte Danielson's research-based Framework for Teaching. It is currently in the pilot stages to fine-tune district implementation for all teachers. The system has an online observation tool and a module linking evaluation to professional learning. It has multiple measures including student growth data. The principal evaluation system (PEVAL) has been under development since fall 2011 and includes measures of students' achievement and growth. The professional learning system in the district provides school level training informed by student data and evaluation analysis as well as TEVAL and PEVAL outcomes. A strength of the evaluation system in the district is the thoughtful planning and design that has gone into the implementation to ensure effectiveness. The system appears to be robust and well-designed.

b)

i) Educators have training and support from Instructional Math Coaches and a Student Data Support Specialist in implementing personalized learning support plans for students which meets this criteria.

ii) The application does not describe in detail learning resources available in the district, however, in the narrative and in vignettes there is mention of experts advising teachers in creating lessons, instruction based on high quality frameworks, and high-interest modules in use during extended learning opportunities. Teachers are provided with a laptop and a mini-tablet for creating and sharing resources. Students are able to access resources using devices provided in the district 1:1 personalized learning environment. More information on learning resources is needed to meet the criteria for this section.

iii) During professional learning with content area teacher leaders teachers will have embedded professional development time to engage in reflective practices geared to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies, interventions, and supports designed to increase the number of students graduating college- and career-ready. This is a feasible approach to meet the criteria.

c)

i & ii) Teacher effectiveness and practice will be evaluated using the Danielson Framework. Administrators have been trained on this framework and are assisted at the school level by consulting teachers. The district provides a structure for school improvement through the School Leader Networks which are professional learning teams for school leaders. These teams meet regularly to analyze student achievement and growth data, share learning through successes, and collaborate to overcome barriers and challenges. Members of the district level Academic Team participate in these School Leader Networks to ensure adequate support from central office. The School Leader Networks will be a key element in providing support to school leaders in successful implementation of personalized learning environments through instructional rounds, consultancies, and facilitated improvement planning. The implementation of TEVAL and the School Leader Networks is a feasible approach to meeting these criteria.

d) A high quality plan is in place to implement the district’s new teacher evaluation system (TEVAL) and the principal evaluation system (PEVAL) including activities/milestones, persons responsible, and a detailed timeline. The appendix contains a detailed narrative explaining the TEVAL process. This entire project focuses on math and high-needs schools. The plan provides supports for special education and other special student populations. The central office special education director participates in the School Leader Networks. This is a reasonable approach to meeting the criteria for this section.

The score for this selection criteria is in the high level based on a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching, but sparse information on learning resources.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a)The applicant has a feasible plan in place for effective support and services to all schools. The chief academic officer will oversee the project, the district Academic Team is the primary vehicle for support and seems to be well designed to lead the effort. Their participation in the school leader network is important. A strength is in the makeup of the team which includes administrators and teachers in leadership roles. Appropriately, new positions are provided by the grant to expand capacity for reform support. They are a school transformation project coordinator, a project manager, and an operations and finance specialist.

b) The district Comprehensive Plan Framework from 2011 mentions “...movement away from site-based management with limited accountability to effective management structures that prioritize equity and access.” However the narrative in this section seems to reverse this movement with mention of providing autonomy to school leaders requiring changes in district policies and practices. The narrative seems to suggest the district will move back to site-based management allowing autonomy in budget development and management, and in human resources support including hiring and calendar development . It appears that the oversight to assure accountability will be provided by the director of school performance management, the school transformation project coordinator and the project manager. The approach described seems feasible to meet the criteria.

c)In order for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery the district is implementing a district-wide proficiency-based policy and creating structures to support personalized learning environments. Proficiency-based diplomas will be awarded not later than 2017-18 as required by state law. Additionally, the district-adopted CCSSs expand proficiency-based progression across the district. This plan for implementation meets the criteria for this section.

d)The plan details resources that give students opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in a variety of ways. Mentioned are the 1:1 devices to be implemented district-wide which provide the ability for students to demonstrate mastery in a variety of formats and the use of formative and summative assessments with data included in personalized learning plans. This is a feasible plan for meeting the criteria.

e)The plan commits to providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all, both in and out of school. This commitment plus personalized learning plans for students and strategies to provide translators and interpreters, ensuring accessible reading level of all written communication, family and community engagement professional development for staff, home visitation and more are sufficient to meet the criteria for this section.

The score for this section is at the highest level based on district practices that facilitate personalized learning in a focused manner.

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

a)The district commitment to personalized learning ensures access to content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school to all students, parents, educators and other stakeholders to support implementation of the Math Transformation Project, regardless of income level or language barrier. The district Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement is focused on addressing policy, infrastructure, and systems barriers and supports for family and community participation in learning. The project plan includes implementation of promising and best practices to engage all families in schools including empowering parents with home learning tied directly to classroom instruction, a reasonable approach.

b)The plan calls for appropriately increasing technical support to classrooms but does not mention technical support for parents, students and other stakeholders. The narrative mentions that one function of Parent University is to help families understand their students' data and provide tools for extending learning into the home. It is not clear whether parents will have access to the data system from home though the application narrative mentions the system will support real-time communication between home and school. There is no mention of whether a plan is in place to provide technical support for that. This lack of information on technical support is not responsive to the criteria for this section.

c & d) The application narrative notes that the new data system will allow students to export information to apply in other settings. There is no mention of whether the system is interoperable in regard to human resources and budget data, however, student information data and instructional improvement system data will be included. The lack of information on interoperability of the data system with human resources and budget data is not responsive to all requirements of this selection criteria.

The score for this section is at the high point of the middle range due to sparse information on parent home access to the data system, whether technical support for parents is provided and missing information on some data system interoperability components.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has provided a high-quality plan for implementing a continuous improvement process for the project that includes strategies, activities/milestones, persons responsible, and a detailed timeline for each key component. Building on a component of the Riverton SIG project, this project includes internal and external monitoring strategies that would be brought to scale with RTTD. These include a district diagnostic audit performed by Mass Insight Education and a professional development study conducted by the Center for Educational Policy at the University of Massachusetts. The district partnered with Research for Better Teaching, Inc. to help develop school-based teams to regularly review student data and classroom practice. The district conducts a school culture and climate study to facilitate goal setting. The School Performance Team will meet regularly to review project plan progress, budget, milestones, and data. A plan will be developed for bringing behind schedule milestones back on track. The team will report findings to the CAO, Director of School Management Progress and the Academic Team. Regular progress updates to the school board will be made public to the community. The criteria for this section is met due to the strong, multi-faceted plan for monitoring, measuring and sharing information on the quality of its investments in all aspects of the project.</p> <p>The score for this section is at the highest level due to the quality of the plan for implementing a continuous improvement process.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides a narrative describing a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders throughout the grant period. However, specific communication strategies are not woven into the project work plan which could result in missing tracking of activities to ensure completion. The district Executive Team, District Leadership Council, School Administrator Professional Learning Groups, Academic Team, and School Improvement Teams are the key leadership groups in implementing project goals and objectives and will report their work and results to increase communication between and among teams regarding project implementation process and results. The district will communicate regularly with key stakeholders regarding process and progress on grant goals through regular updates to the school board that will also be communicated with community partners, such as ConnectED, and publicly for families and community members. School Advisory Council members will be updated regularly and will share project vision, mission, goals, activities, and successes with other families and the community to gain district-wide support and engagement in the school transformation process. This is a feasible plan for meeting the criteria for this section. The family and community engagement section of the work plan is well developed with all components in place to describe a coordinated plan of activities to achieve engagement goals.</p> <p>The score for this section is at the low point of the high range due to a strong ongoing engagement plan but missing specific activities/milestones, persons responsible and detailed timelines for ongoing communication.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has provided no narrative to describe performance measures for this project. The performance measures provided are</p>		

not completely responsive to the metrics required by the selection criteria for this section in the following ways:

- Only 10 performance measure tables are provided and only four are complete, instead of the approximately 12-14 required.
- Performance Measure tables for All Applicants a and b regarding students with highly effective and effective teachers and principals contain no baseline information or targets, except that baseline data will be collected in Spring 2014.
- Required performance measures 9-12 d and e are not provided.
- PreK-3 b and 4-8 c performance indicators describe a school climate survey of parents in all elementary schools which includes indicators of parent and student engagement, respect, and support. This is a general description of a performance indicator and does not specifically name a performance measure to be reviewed and improved over time. No baseline information or targets are provided, except that a baseline will be collected in Spring 2014.
- 9-12 a and c do not provide information on all subgroups or a rationale for exclusion of some subgroups. Only LEP and Black subgroups are listed.

Performance measures meeting the selection criteria for completeness are ambitious yet achievable and are based on growth targets in the district's comprehensive plan.

a, b & c) Required applicant-proposed performance measures that are provided have included rationale for selecting that performance measure. Two applicant-required performance measures for grades 9-12 are missing. Applicant-required health or social-emotional leading indicators for grades K-3 and 4-8, school climate surveys, do not provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. No data is provided for these measures. No performance measures provided indicate how the applicant will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress

The score for this section is at the low end of the middle range due to incomplete information and responsiveness to the metrics required by the selection criteria.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD funded activities through qualitative and quantitative measures. The plan is described in the narrative. Budget documents and the project work plan contain additional information to meet the requirements of a high quality plan including strategies, activities/milestones, persons responsible and detailed timelines. Professional development and activities that employ technology are included in the evaluation process. The School Transformation Coordinator, manager, and Account Specialist; along with the Academic Team and school administrator professional learning groups will document investments and results throughout the projects. The district will contract with a professional outside evaluator to develop and implement process and outcome evaluations for the project and conduct ongoing analysis and feedback of data and process to inform the project progress and outcome. The district will be able to evaluate levels of impact and outcomes of levels of investment between schools and report effectiveness of investments. These data will provide continuous feedback to make project adjustments throughout the program period, as well as inform future planning and local fund budget development for future sustainability. The inclusion of multiple groups in the evaluation process and the inclusion of a professional evaluation are strengths of the plan.

The score for this section is at the highest level due to the quality of the plan provided and inclusion of required elements for meeting the criteria.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) All expenses in the budget for the Math Transformation Project are to be paid with RTTD grant funds except for \$20,000 per grant year for a total of \$80,000.00 in the Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Coherence portion of the project. No source for these funds is identified. However, the overall budget summary project list indicates that all expenditures are budgeted from RTTD grand funds. Additionally total numbers are missing in portions of the Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Coherence, Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning and Family and Community Engagement project tables in this section. The conflicting numbers and lack of

information on the funding source for these other funds is not responsive to the criteria for this section.

b) The budget narrative provided in the budget tables provides a sound rationale for expenditures related to the overall application narrative to support the implementation of the proposal. A major portion of the budget is dedicated to personnel expenditures for professional development, instructional support, project management, evaluation, community engagement and other areas essential to the success of the project.

c)

i) As mentioned above, all funds budgeted for the project are from the RTTD grant except for an \$80,000 expenditure earmarked as funds from other sources used to support the project. No explanation is provided to account for the source of these funds. The conflicting numbers and omission of an explanation for the source of these funds is not responsive to the selection criteria.

ii) One-time expenses are explained in the budget table narrative and clearly displayed in the column for the year they are to be expended. A one-time expenditure is for technology devices to be purchased in year one of the project. The strategy for this purchase is to complete the 1:1 project in the district to meet the goals of the Math Transformation Project for student personalized learning. The rationale for using these devices to access student data and instructional resources as well as build mastery and demonstrate mastery is sound and explained in the project narrative. The state 1:1 project provides devices for middle school students and teachers. Discounts available through the state project enable the district to provide devices to all high school students and teachers. The SIG project extended devices to participating elementary schools. Acquiring funds for a large infusion of devices to complete the 1:1 initiative to the rest of the students and teachers ensures sustainability of personalized environments as future expenditures for ongoing maintenance and replacement costs will be manageable for the district. The other one-time expenditure is for the student data system, another year one purchase to contract with a technology organization to customize and/or develop a system to support personalized learning, a major component of this project. The expenditure would include any hardware needed. Once grant funding is acquired to fund the initial expense, existing resources dedicated to the current ineffective student data system can be used to maintain the new system. These budget items are appropriately selected to meet project goals and meet the criteria for this section.

The score for this section is in the low end of the high range based on appropriate budget expenditures and rationales and missing and conflicting information on sources of funding.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative for this section provides information on sustainability of project goals after the end of the grant period built on expanded capacity in the district provided by grant funds. This includes implementation specialists that will develop skills and capacity district-wide, technology and data system investments, the teacher and principal evaluation system, expanded capacity for coordinating extending learning opportunities long-term and capacity building at the school level to implement best practices in family and community engagement. The rationale is that district funds can sustain the project with upgrade funding after the major expenditure in project infrastructure including technology, student data system and personnel expenditures to build personalized learning capacity through professional development and support. The narrative provides a reasonable view of sustainability beyond the grant term. However, specific information is sparse. There are no budget numbers for three years out after project end. The applicant discusses strategies but does not provide activities, persons responsible and a timeline. There is no information on how improvements in productivity and outcomes will be evaluated to inform a post-grant budget.

The score for this section is at the high point of the middle range due to a feasible rationale for sustainability of project goals after the grant ends but a lack of specific information for a high quality plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

1. The applicant describes a number of partnerships formed in support of the Math Transformation Project. The partnerships fall into two categories:

- Engagement in schools - School Advisory Councils (a model of collaborative leadership and empowerment made up of families representing the diversity of the school community, as well as organizations, businesses, and other community members), Parent University (District Project to decrease barriers for families), Family Outreach Coordinators (District Position works to build capacity within the school to support family and community partnerships).
- Wraparound supports - Center for Grieving Children (CGC) (Refugees), Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children (CPPC) (a community coalition in Portland focused on bringing together social service providers, government programs, schools, community members, and other community stakeholders to support the needs of families and students), Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) (Removing barriers to careers for at-risk students), Partnership for Equity in Education (inequity in schools), Mentoring (District Program for HS students, ELL students).

The partnership information provided describes a coherent and sustainable partnership to support the plan by removing barriers to student achievement.

2. The applicant has provided six population level desired results, identified by type and population group. The desired results are mainly in the Family/Community category or a combination of Education and Family/community. All of these support the Math Transformation Project goals.

3.

a & b) No information is provided in the application on tracking selected indicators, using the data to target resources, developing a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students or improving results over time.

c) The applicant describes developing a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students or improving results over time in section C1 of the proposal. As part of the SIG process at Riverton Elementary the Parent Academy structure was created focusing on strategies for supporting students. The applicant appropriately proposes building on the success at Riverton by scaling up the Parent Academies to all schools in the district with a focus on supporting individualized student learning in mathematics. This meets the criteria for this section.

4. Within the participating schools the applicant describes the manner in which the partnership would integrate education and other services including social-emotional, behavioral and acculturation for immigrants and refugees. Information is provided for each organization to explain their focus and approach. A common approach is for school staff to identify students with a need for services and match them with the appropriate partnering organization.

5.

a, b, c) No information is provided on building capacity of staff to assess the needs and assets of participating students aligned with partnership goals, identifying and inventorying the needs and assets of the school and community aligned with those goals, and creating a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of students.

d)The applicant describes a plan to build capacity of staff to engage parents and families of participating students in decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student family and school needs through the Family Outreach Coordinator (FOC) at the schools with demonstrated highest need. These support professionals will help build staff competency in implementation of best practices in family engagement, build capacity within the school to support family and community partnerships, foster relationship with families and the community, and work to shift the culture of schools to family and community-friendly environments. This plan meets the criteria for this section.

e) The work plan mentions activities in which CGC, JMG and/or principals are persons responsible. They are collecting project end data on student social and emotional factors, collect project end academic and behavioral data for participating students, and annual reporting on program outcomes. There is no clear description of how staff capacity would be built to routinely assess progress in implanting the plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges.

6) Only two performance measures are cited in the application. They are the high school graduation rate performance measure, with a notation to see the E3 tables, and the school climate survey performance measure which does not identify or explain what is being measured by the school climate survey. No annual targets are provided for the school climate survey. The criteria for this section is not responsive to the metrics for this section due to a missing performance measure description and annual targets.

The score for this section is at the mid point of the middle range due to the quality partnerships described and the failure to address sections 3 a-b, and 5 a-c which is not responsive to requirements in these sections related to the partnership and an incomplete performance measure table.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Portland Public Schools' Math Transformation Project addresses the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments to meet the criteria for Absolute Priority 1. The project includes the development of mathematical-focused personalized learning plans (PLPs) and goals. The project will allow each student to monitor his/her PLP and goals and indicate progress toward achieving Common Core Standards in math. Math assessments will be aligned to CCSS establishing grade level expectations for regular and ongoing formative and summative assessments. However, it is not clear, from information provided in the plan, how achievement toward meeting math proficiency goals is linked to college and career readiness.</p> <p>The plan includes upgrading the data system allowing students, teachers, and parents to have the ability to use customized dashboards to routinely track progress and make timely, data-based adjustments to their learning and choices to ensure they meet their personalized learning goals. Completing the whole district implementation of a 1:1 student to computer ratio to facilitate personalized learning is a important part of the district plan.</p> <p>In order to increase educator effectiveness the applicant cites high quality, ongoing, embedded professional development as a strategy for recruiting and retaining teachers and leaders. Professional development tied directly to student data and evaluation system indicators, peer coaching for instructional and leadership staff and common planning time to foster collaborative leadership and instruction are important steps in increasing educator effectiveness and retention. These strategies would expand student access to the most effective educators. The plan provides for recruiting new, school-based instructional math coaches and school improvement support teachers, contributing to the support structure for educator effectiveness. Supplying teachers with a laptop and a mini-tablet and classrooms with a projector and Apple TV is an important step toward enhancing the personalized learning environment and increasing teacher effectiveness.</p> <p>Building on School Improvement Grant progress at two schools in improving student performance and reducing achievement gaps, the Math Transformation project is designed to use extra math supports at the lowest performing schools. The plan is to employ a tiered approach to providing supports at these schools in phases, however, it is not clear how decisions will be made to move from one phase to the next before change can occur. A strong extended learning initiative, particularly the extended day and extended school year learning, is an important part of this effort. Schools will integrate internships, job shadowing, community service opportunities, and proficiency-based graduation to engage students, accelerate their achievement and deepen their learning.</p> <p>Partnerships with community organizations and academic institutions to provide academic and wraparound support for teachers and students as well as a multi-faceted effort to engage parents and families in their schools to improve student learning support are important aspects of the plan.</p> <p>The applicant has met Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	168
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0185ME-3 for Portland Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score

(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has taken some steps to build upon the four core educational assurance areas. Specifically, the applicant has: (1) adopted state common core standards and intends to utilize contract award resources to ensure effective alignment of the math curriculum and assessments to those standards; (2) established plans to extend the day and school year to include more activities aimed at enabling students to meet college and career goals; (3) adopted an evaluation system for teachers, principals and superintendents that takes into account student growth and peer evaluation; (4) indicated it has a plan to implement a data management system to support the project; (5) organized the MTP project into tiers that are designed to ensure that the lowest performing and high need schools receive the deepest level of services.</p> <p>Although the applicant presents a cogent description how it expects implementation of the Math Transformation Project (MTP) will improve student achievement, the proposal does not fully articulate a coherent reform vision in that it lacks a clear discussion of how the personalized learning environments that will be created with resources from the RTT award would actually deepen student learning or how the classroom experience would be improved. The applicant indicates that by leveraging improvements to the delivery of math instruction in all schools, students will improve academically in all subjects. The focus on efforts to align the math curriculum and assessments to newly adopted state standards (which incorporate Common Core standards) reflect a commitment to prepare students for college and career, but the applicant has not sufficiently articulated how the singular focus on math content will translate to whole school improvement. This raises questions as to whether the applicant has articulated a clear approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized learning that is credible. The description of the strategies relating to math instruction do not create a clear picture of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has chosen to take a tiered approach to the identification of students who will participate in the MTP. The proposal includes a list of the schools to be served by the proposal and the required information regarding the total number of participating students and educators and those students who are from low income families and who are high need. Although all schools within the LEA will receive some of the benefits generated under the contract award, the majority of resources will be dedicated to schools identified by the applicant as lower performing schools because of lower math achievement and growth and lower overall achievement and growth among ELL, special needs and more economically disadvantaged students. This decision to implement the project at one set of schools as part of Phase I, a second set of schools in Phase II and to reach the remainder of the LEA's schools with some supports following the completion of Phase II seems likely to facilitate effective targeting of resources to students with the highest need. However, the applicant does not provide a detailed explanation of precisely how individual schools were chosen over other schools within the LEA. Although each school designated as a "transformation school" is described and appears to have some needs that can be addressed by the MTP, the criteria applicant used to exclude other schools is not clear.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that the successful strategies that have been utilized in a few schools will be expanded as part of the MTP and implemented in all schools over time, with those highest need schools receiving the deepest level of support. It is clear that the applicant expects that its focus on implementation of a math curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the new Common Core standards will improve student performance. It also demonstrates consistently that it believes personalized learning that focuses on individual student goals and progress toward achievement of standards will also facilitate improved academic achievement. However, the applicant's specific theory of change is not made explicit. Moreover, the connection between the implementation of a new math curriculum and the personalization of learning is not clear. The proposal falls short of presenting a high quality plan for LEA-wide reform and change because the applicant does not present a specific outcomes or deliverables applicable to each phase of the MTP. It provides generally for the re-evaluation of which schools should receive supports, but does not provide any specific desired outcome or deliverable for each phase. Thus, while the plan to roll out the MTP to schools based on need is sound, the lack of specific outcomes and deliverables suggests that the applicant may not be prepared to ensure that participating schools obtain the resources and supports they need before more schools are phased into the MTP.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A number of the goals that the applicant has set are ambitious, but do not seem achievable given the applicant's vision that focuses primarily on strategies for improving and personalizing math instruction. Although the applicant aims to prepare students to graduate college and career ready, the proposal does not include any performance targets for college enrollment and suggests that data that would enable applicant to do so is not currently available. The information presented with regard to college enrollment does not fully explain why no performance targets were set.</p> <p>The applicant has set a performance target for student performance on statewide assessments, for decreasing the achievement gaps that exist for all subgroups and for graduation rates. The annual goals set are not consistently aligned with the applicant's vision. As an example: the goals set for increased academic proficiency assume improvements in academic growth, but the applicant does not present any separate measures or targets for growth on statewide assessments or other measures. The goals for math and reading proficiency are included for elementary and high school students, for all relevant subgroups and for males and females. Yet, the targets for students overall and for the subgroups are very ambitious and in some cases the significant level of expected improvement raises serious questions as to whether the goals are achievable. As examples: (1) the applicant proposes to close the achievement gap entirely for all subgroups in math and reading proficiency by the end of the contract period. However, even with the projected double-digit growth annually on statewide assessments for some subgroups, the certain groups would still perform below white students. (2) the performance targets for 11th grade math and reading proficiency are extremely ambitious for LEP, Black and special needs students. In some cases, students in these subgroups are expected to improve 80 or more percentage points during the contract period. (3) although the MTP focuses on making specific improvements to the math curriculum and instruction, the targets for reading are far more ambitious than those for math proficiency.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant submits that the increased academic improvement experienced by students in two of schools that received SIG for implementation of whole school reforms should serve as evidence that its plan to implement the MTP throughout the rest of the district will be successful. The applicant reports that both schools saw double-digit improvements over three years in two learning outcomes -- math and reading proficiency and in higher attendance rates. However, while it does appear that the two schools that received SIG funds have improved student performance, the strategies that were used to drive the academic achievement appear to have very little to do with math curriculum at those schools or personalized learning. Instead, the schools benefited from whole school reform strategies such as extended day, adding teachers in order to provide more planning and professional development time for content teachers and instituting block scheduling. Applicant also references a teacher induction/mentoring initiative implemented several years ago, recent contract negotiations with teachers and programs it is currently working to implement in high schools as additional proof that it has a good track record with district-wide reform efforts.</p> <p>The applicant's references to these limited reform efforts to date do not reflect a clear prior record of success. The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence that it has a track record of successfully implementing a district-wide effort to transform learning in ways that generate four years of improved proficiency or close or narrow achievement gaps (although ELL student performance improved in one of the schools). Nor does the applicant demonstrate that the LEA has a good track record of making student performance data available to students, parents and appropriate educators to improve performance.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some transparency into its expenditures and budgeting process. The LEA provides a wide range of expenditure reporting to the state and includes school and district level expenditure data in its reporting to the public as part of its annual budget process and on its website. However, the applicant does not make actual school level personnel salary data available. The school level non-personnel expenditures are made public as part of budget books that can be accessed on the district website. Moreover, the applicant does not provide any evidence that it has the structure in place or plans put a structure in place that will ensure that there is a high level of transparency in the LEA's decision making and</p>		

investments with regard to implementation of the MTP.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented ample evidence which demonstrates that the State of Maine has a regulatory environment that is very supportive of the reforms that applicant seeks to implement. Specifically, the applicant notes that the State has codified its commitment to giving LEAs local control under Maine Law Title 20-A. Thus, LEAs are given autonomy to make decisions that are best suited to the students that attend district schools. In addition, the applicant points to a number of other laws that suggest that the district will be able to implement the MTP in a supportive environment, including (1) LD 1422, An Act to Prepare Maine People for the Future Economy, which requires districts to implement awarding standards-based or proficiency-based diplomas starting in 2017; (2) LD 1858, An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership, which requires all districts to develop and implement a teacher and principal evaluation system that includes student growth and achievement and (3) the Laptop Technology Initiative (MLTI), which provides every Portland middle school student with a tablet device and every middle school teacher with a laptop and mini tablet device.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that it engaged teachers, administrators, parents and community members in a comprehensive process aimed at developing a district wide “Comprehensive Plan” which was generated to sets the district vision, mission, and goals for preparing all students to graduate college and career ready. The MTP grew out of the process that created the district’s comprehensive plan. The engagement of various stakeholders (except students) appears to have been meaningful in that the process included community surveys, staff focus groups, and community forums. In addition to the stakeholders who were involved in developing the comprehensive plan, the applicant has created a District Leadership Council, which includes representatives of the Portland Education Association, Portland Administrators Association, the PPS Educational Technicians Association, and the BASE Association, a group representing secretaries, maintenance, and other support staff.

Although the applicant references a partnership with an organization called ConnectED, the proposal does not provide sufficient information regarding the resources that ConnectED will bring to the relationship or how the organization will work with the LEA to facilitate implementation of the MTP. The letter of support submitted by ConnectED confirms that the organization intends to work collaboratively with the district and “to help in any way possible to enhance the infusion of relationships, relevance and rigor into school, curriculum and programming.” However, neither the ConnectED letter, nor the proposal itself describe the partnership in any detail beyond the facilitation of mentoring, tutoring, internships and job shadowing opportunities. A large number of the community organizations a majority of them simply refer back to their involvement with ConnectED. Other organizations offer their strong support to the applicant’s proposed project, including what appear to be the relevant collective bargaining units for teachers and other educators and school staff, the Portland Education Association Benefit Association of School Employees and the Portland Education Association, Education Technician Unit.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified a number of strategies that it would like to implement in all of its schools to improve student performance and to personalize learning in some ways. However, the applicant has not developed a high quality plan to implement these strategies. The proposal lacks many of the principal elements of a high quality plan. The applicant has not identified clear goals that are consistent with the rest of the proposal. Not has it identified specific activities and deliverables that will lead to achievement of key goals and a timeline to accomplish each activity. Instead, the applicant’s proposal includes a variety of different possible programs and initiatives that it expects schools will adopt in order to drive improved performance. The applicant does make clear that in furtherance of its focus on an aligned curriculum and instructional coherence, students will be instructed using curriculum and assessments that are aligned to college and career ready standards. This suggests students will have access to deeper learning experiences and be given the opportunity to master critical academic content and develop necessary skills such as teamwork and problem-solving. Under the MTP, the LEA will require teachers and students to use data that is generated from pre- and post-testing to set individual student

goals and inform instruction and it sounds as though students will be able to pursue a personalized sequence of instruction to some extent. However, there is no specific plan that details the particular implementation goals for each school with regard to generating personalized learning plans for students in transformation schools during either Phase I or Phase II of the project. There is no timeline given, no deliverables and no identification who will be responsible for implementation for the development of actual personalized learning plans.

In addition, with regard to the other elements of the MTP: Effective Teaching and Leading, Extended Learning Opportunities and Family and Community Engagement, the applicant does not provide a concrete plan for implementation.

- The applicant indicates that instructional coaches will be used, but there is no discussion of how they will be deployed and precisely what they will be expected to accomplish.
- The applicant cites to a group of students who have some of their instruction through targeted learning time as an example of personalized learning already in place, but there is no discussion as to whether the approach described is what will be replicated as part of the MTP. The proposal would benefit from a more explicit discussion of how the 1:1 technology will be used to personalize learning and as well as goals and a specific timeline for implementation.
- The applicant suggests that students will be given more opportunities for learning outside of class, but there is no discussion of what the plan for providing those opportunities to students will be. Instead, there is a suggestion for what summer school could look like and references to extended day at SIG schools.
- The applicant indicates that Parent Academies will be offered at every school, but it offers no concrete plan. The proposal does not include any outcomes or goals for establishment of the Parent Academies. There is no timeline for implementation, no deliverables and no one is identified for accountability purposes.

The lack of clarity with regard to the overall approach to learning makes it unclear whether the MTP will enable students to have access to a set of high quality strategies, that provide for regular feedback on performance and student data that informs learning and will help students understand their progress toward mastery of college and career ready standards. Moreover, it is not clear whether educators implementing MTP will be able to make the necessary accommodations to serve high-need students and provide all students with access to training and support that will be necessary to manage their own learning.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to improve teaching and leading by adding a significant number of teaching positions to the staff at each school. Each school will add content area teacher leaders, long-term substitute teachers, a math coordinator, school improvement support teachers and consulting teachers to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge, training and time to implement the newly aligned curriculum, to use individual student data to improve and drive instruction and to personalize learning. As the applicant's specific illustration demonstrates, the addition of these positions will likely enhance the ability of schools to address specific problems in real time and to adjust instruction quickly to accommodate students' needs. It will be critical, however, that the coaches and other individuals brought into schools to serve in these new roles have sufficient professional development. The proposal lacks a detailed discussion of how and when all new and existing teachers will receive professional development and what types of training they will receive to ensure they are prepared to carry out the applicant's plans.

In its current form, the proposal lacks the necessary detail to demonstrate that the applicant has a high quality plan to improve teaching and leading by enabling full implementation of personalized learning. It is unclear from the proposal whether the educators will be provided with the training or digital resources (except laptops and mini-tablets) that will be necessary to deliver personalized learning to students. Although the applicant discusses generally that coaches will be employed to help teachers adapt their teaching strategies based on data and to improve their content knowledge, the applicant has not identified or put in place a learning management system that will enable teachers to obtain regular, individual student level data and receive continuous feedback about the effectiveness of the strategies being used to meet student needs. Consulting teachers will be used to evaluate teachers and to improve teachers' practice and provide feedback but there is no clearly articulated plan for training those consulting teachers and ensuring they have the necessary resources (such as actionable information so they can identify new approaches for students, high quality resources for students that teachers can use, a wide array of tools to match different student needs). Also, it is unclear whether the district or the individual schools will make decisions regarding hiring of the various content teachers, coaches and consulting teachers that will be so integral to implementation of the plan.

Moreover, the applicant does not discuss increasing the number of highly effective teachers or the training of leaders or administrators in any real detail. The applicant does have a high quality plan on any of these specific areas, as it does not identify any specific goals, outcomes, timelines for implementation or hiring of the different teachers and coaches or deliverables.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has established a detailed system of support at the district level to facilitate implementation of the MTP. Specifically, the applicant has selected the Chief Academic Officer to oversee implementation of any grant award and has formed an Academic Team, that includes the Director of School Performance Management, Content Area Teacher Leaders, ESEA and SIG program coordinators, Special Education Director, Instructional Technology Director, Multilingual and Multicultural director, and the Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement, to work with the CAO. In addition to the existing LEA staff who will oversee the project, the applicant intends to hire several others, including a School Transformation Project Coordinator, a Project Manager, an Operations and a Finance Specialist. Together, these individuals should be able to adequately manage implementation of the project effectively. In addition, the School Leader Networks should be able to make helpful contributions to ensure effective implementation. Although the plan is comprehensive in nature, in that there are concretely identified parties who will be held responsible for implementation, the applicant does not make clear how each of these individuals and groups will work together consistently to ensure efficient operation of the project. There appears to be a number of potential roles that could overlap in function.</p> <p>The applicant seems committed to ensuring that the individual schools will be given the necessary flexibility and autonomy to make the MTP work in their schools. Those schools will also be given resources through the support of the Project Manager, Project Coordinator and the various teachers and coaches hired for implementation. The applicant does not make clear who will make hiring decisions, but if those decisions are made at the school level, this reinforces the applicant's contention that schools will be given authority and autonomy to implement the project. The flexibility that appears to be embedded in the current contract with the teachers' union also suggests that schools will not be limited in their ability to utilize new approaches and strategies to teaching and learning.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated that it is in the process of adopting policies that will allow students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. In keeping with the new state law, the LEA plans to award proficiency-based diplomas no later than school year 2017-2018. In addition, students throughout the district will have access to the digital resources necessary to extend learning beyond the classroom and receive instruction online. In some schools students already perform some coursework on tablets.</p> <p>The applicant makes a blanket statement about its ability to meet the needs of all students but is essentially silent as to how it will actually provide access and information to students and families who speak another language or who need special technological assistance to participate in personalized learning instruction. The proposal would be enhanced by inclusion of a detailed plan for accommodating those students and families and ensuring that access to personalized learning will be available to everyone.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has at least two important resources available to help ensure that all students and their families have access to the supports that will be necessary to support implementation of the MTP and personalized learning: the district's Family and Community Engagement office and the Multilingual Multicultural Office. The coordinator of Family and Community Engagement will work with families to address any barriers to participation and the Multilingual Multicultural Office aims to help parents who may have language or cultural barriers to accessing the resources that will be necessary for implementation. Although these two resources will likely be helpful to ensure all students can participate in personalized learning, the applicant did not provide detailed information on how the offices will be integrated into the MTP to ensure that the necessary resources will be provided to the families those offices serve. Effective implementation will require that the groups work closely with the Academic Team and project leadership, but it is unclear whether applicant has a plan to ensure collaboration.</p> <p>Also, while the applicant makes clear that all students will have access to technology and that the Parent Academies and Parent University will help parents understand how to work with their children, the proposal does not discuss whether the academies or Parent University programs will be designed in ways that are accessible to all parents regardless of their language or cultural backgrounds. In addition, although the applicant makes a reference to the ability students will have to export information to apply in other settings, there is no detailed discussion of interoperability that will allow LEAs, schools and families to use compatible data systems. Moreover, the level of technical support that will be available in all settings is</p>		

not made clear (although it is included as part of some consultant costs in the budget).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has devised a sound plan for implementing a continuous improvement process. The plan calls for use of both internal and external resources to evaluate progress toward project goals and improved academic achievement. The applicant intends to retain outside groups to perform a diagnostic audit and a professional development study with regard to the project as a whole. In addition, culture and climate studies will be conducted at the district and school levels. Internally, the LEA has developed capacity to have school based data teams review student data and classroom practices and recommend modifications to teaching and instruction based on that review. The plan to form School Performance Teams whose job it will be to regularly review project plan progress and report findings to the CAO and Director of School Management is a good one. The applicant suggest that updates will be provided regularly to stakeholders through the Academic Team and to the public by the School Board itself.</p> <p>The plan can be considered high quality in that the applicant has included key goals or outcomes for the continuous improvement process. Moreover, the applicant has identified the timeline for implementation, provided a general description of the activities to be undertaken and identified who will be in charge of making sure that each of the aforementioned evaluations are conducted and that the process functions properly. However, the applicant does not include a discussion of how stakeholders will monitor, obtain and share feedback on the quality of the investments made in furtherance of the MTP.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to rely on existing structures to ensure that regular updates with regard to progress and implementation of the MTP are communicated to stakeholders. Specifically, the applicant will ensure that the Executive Team, District Leadership Council, School Administrator Professional Learning Groups, Academic Team, and School Improvement Teams are all communicating with one another and that they have the information needed to provide to their various constituencies. In addition, the applicant will leverage School Board meetings and its relationship with other community partners through ConnectED to communicate progress on the plan to the public. At the school level, School Advisory Councils will be informed and used to obtain feedback and input on implementation of personalized learning at individual schools.</p> <p>Although the overall plan is reasonable, it is not a high quality plan. The applicant does not identify any key goals, nor does it specify the activities that will be undertaken to ensure ongoing communication to stakeholders in a concrete way or set forth a timeline, deliverables or identify the parties who will be responsible for ensuring that a consistent stream of information is provided to all the different teams and groups that the applicant expects to carry information to stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not include the requisite number of performance measures. The proposal appears to include less than twelve (12) different performance measures and two of those measures refer to results from a school climate survey, but the specific measures that will be utilized and the targets are not identified. Therefore, the proposal falls short of meeting the requirements for a full set of ambitious yet achievable performance measures. The applicant does include critical measures of student performance and growth in reading and math and certain measures designed to determine college and career readiness such as the rate of college financial aid applications and the Accuplacer Test which is used to determine readiness to take college mathematics. These measures do appear to provide information that is tailored to the applicant's vision and focus on the MTP. The inclusion of the Accuplacer Test reflects the use of an ambitious yet achievable performance measure. However, the applicant does not provide any rationale to explain its decision to include a financial aid application measure, which could be indicative of factors other than college readiness. The increases proposed for the academic performance measures are sufficiently ambitious, yet achievable and the applicant does include a sound rationale for its inclusion of those measures.</p>		

The applicant does not include a detailed discussion of how the measures selected will lead to information that is tailored to its proposed plan or theory of action and does not explicitly explain how it chose the different performance measures that are included. Nor does the applicant make an independent plan for ensuring that the measures are sufficient to provide information on student progress throughout the contract period or to make adjustments in the event some of the measures do not provide formative information.

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

The applicant plans to evaluate the effectiveness of its investments primarily through internal assessments that will be made by the School Transformation Coordinator, Manager, and Account Specialist with the assistance of the Academic Team and School Administrator Professional Learning Groups. The proposal does not include a detailed discussion of the steps that the Coordinator or project manager or account specialist will take to ensure that a thorough and rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of the applicant's investments in personnel, professional development, a management system and technology. For that reason, the plan cannot be considered high quality. There are no key goals, no specific evaluation activities that will be undertaken, no timeline and no deliverables that are specific to evaluation of investments made under the plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal identifies all of the different funds that will be used to support implementation of the MTP. The applicant's budget represents a significant investment in new personnel for the district. The overwhelming majority of the funding to be utilized by the applicant would be spent to hire the new teachers and coaches that will be necessary to implement and maintain personalized learning environments in the classroom. Close to \$14 million of the \$19 million request would be dedicated to new personnel under the applicant's plan. These costs appear to be operational rather than one-time costs and the applicant does not provide a sufficient explanation about the feasibility of fully funding the plan beyond the contract years. The budget also appears to be somewhat short on dollars for professional development. Given the significant influx of new personnel into the schools, the new and existing teachers and leaders would likely benefit from deeper levels of professional development and training on how to use the new data and data management systems to create personalized learning environments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant seeks close to \$14 million to add new personnel to its ranks but does not identify any funds from other sources that it could use to ensure that the teachers and coaches that will be added at schools can be maintained beyond the contract period. The applicant asserts generally that the district will be able to maintain the transformational changes it will make as part of the MTP, but does not provide any detailed explanation how it will do so. The proposal appears to be silent as to how the district will be able to afford to retain the numbers of school level content lead teachers, school improvement support teachers and math coaches that are critical to provision of personalized learning as the applicant envisions it. The applicant refers to the one time investments in technology and the data or learning management system and accompanying training as evidence that the project is sustainable, but the learning management system and technology costs represent a relatively small portion of the overall budget. Therefore, the applicant has not devised a high quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the grant period. The proposal does not include any key goals for sustainability and there is no timeline for achieving sustainability, no specific activities, no deliverables and no one is identified for accountability purposes.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a sound plan for the integration of district, other public and private resources to supplement the supports provided to students in an effort to improve student learning. The applicant has focused its plan on leveraging relationships and existing partnerships in two areas: 1) engagement in schools and 2) wraparound service provision. To facilitate more parent and community engagement in schools, the applicant will utilize grant resources to establish School Advisory Councils and support the Parent University programming. In addition, the LEA will expand use of the family outreach coordinators to ensure that all families are being served. To provide services to all students, including those who may have special needs, language or cultural barriers or social, emotional or health needs that can be addressed by outside agencies, the applicant proposes to partner with several organizations with varying missions that align with the needs of different student groups. In addition, the applicant suggests that it will offer mentoring programs to students and will endeavor to partner with organizations who can assist it in addressing educational inequities.

The proposal would have been improved by a more robust discussion of school climate survey and the information that applicant expects to be able to draw from it. Without more information about the survey, it is unclear whether the applicant will be able obtain information to evaluate progress on the expected outcomes from establishment of these relationships. In some cases, the six (6) population-level desired results that are described will be very difficult to measure unless the climate survey provides responsive information. In addition, the applicant does not include sufficiently rigorous indicators or performance targets. The proposal does not include a discussion of how results will improve over time or how the partnerships will be expanded throughout the life of the project to reach all students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has developed a series of whole school change strategies that it seeks to implement that do build on the core educational assurance areas, even though the discussion of those strategies in the proposal are not consistently coherent. First, the LEA has committed to the use of Common Core standards and assessments that measure students progress against those rigorous standards. The applicant intends to utilize the grant award to ensure that the math curriculum and assessments are appropriately aligned to improve student performance and ensure college and career readiness. Second, the applicant has committed to utilizing a data management system and training its educators and administrators to use data to personalize learning for students and to provide teachers, students and parents access to information on student learning in ways that will drive instruction. Third, the applicant has already adopted an evaluation system that integrates student achievement into the identification of effective educators and has begun to change its system of training and professional development to enhance teaching and leading within the LEA. Fourth, the tiered approach that the applicant is taking to implementation of its MTP reflects its focus on improving those schools with the highest need.

Total	210	137
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