



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0199TN-2 for Tullahoma City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This reviewer is not sure what the vision is for this applicant other than moving to an "open source and proprietary content environment" rather than depending on the purchase and replacement of textbooks on particular cycles for instructional materials and curriculum. The focus of this grant is to make that move through purchasing technology devices and providing educators training in open source and proprietary content. This is a move from having a textbook driven curriculum to having a teacher built curriculum. As the applicant stated, "Our vision has the digital apparatus serving as an access point to download and upload information; and as a tool to ready them for online assessments as well as digital portfolios."</p> <p>The applicant doesn't clearly explain how the approach of having an open source content environment and purchasing technology accelerates student achievement and deepens students learning. The applicant shares that many of its students have little or no access to technology; the proposal envisions every student in the district having a digital textbook that serves as the connection to individual classes and the world at large. This should increase equity.</p> <p>A definite strength of this grant is the way in which it definitely builds on the core educational assurance area relating to standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace. Throughout the proposal there is an emphasis on having open source and proprietary content that is aligned or supports the college- and career-ready standards (also referred to as common core standards). The applicant's migrating to an open source supplemented with proprietary content will be guided by the Tennessee Common Core Standards. In addition, the applicant recognizes that the new state assessments being developed with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) "provides substantial attention and priority to the assessment process." The applicant says this has refocused their attention on student performance on standardized assessments.</p> <p>The applicant provided thoughts from three teachers as to how their classrooms might change as a result of "Open Source and Proprietary Content" implementation. The third teacher provided the most insight into potential changes in his/her classroom including "a learning environment where students can learn different things, at different paces through different approaches." This teacher's description helped with the understanding of what this proposal hopes to have happen.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal by providing "each student in the district with a personal learning environment through digital learning" should support district and school-level implementation.</p> <p>The applicant did not explain its process for deciding that all its schools (7) and students (3500) will participate. Based on the data provided in the table listing the schools and their demographics, the schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The data included the number of educators, number of participating students and how many of those students are considered high-need and/or low-income.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Since this applicant is already including all schools and students as participants in its proposal, this is already scaled to</p>		

district-wide change. The applicant included a plan which describes the goals of the project overall and specifically a funding goal: "To bring technology accessibility equity to all students in order to..." A timeline with little specificity beyond August 2014 and general activities were included in the plan. Persons responsible for the activities were not identified.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance as demonstrated by its ambitious yet achievable annual goals.

The applicant described the methodologies for determining proficiency status, growth and gap reduction on the statewide assessments. The targets or goals are based on the state's annual measurable objectives (AMOs) formula. The data provided in the tables shows that some grade levels and some student subgroups are significantly low, i.e. only 8.3% of English Learners at grade 8 are proficient in reading. By the end of the grant, the goal is to have them at 36.8%. No group has an expected goal above 68.8% in reading proficiency. Considering the baseline data, the goals for this applicant are ambitious yet achievable.

The graduation rate goals are also ambitious. The expectation of reducing graduation gaps by half by the fall of 2017 for each subgroup is good. The 2017-2018 graduation rate goals continue to maintain a significant gap between some groups. The overall rate goal is 90.7% and the goal for students with disabilities is 74.9%.

The college enrollment rate data did not include the same subgroups as the other tables did. The 2017-2018 goal for college enrollment for Hispanics seems rather low.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provided data for three years to demonstrate its success in advancing student learning and achievement. The state's assessments and standards have changed so it was difficult to provide four years of comparable data. Overall, this progress for this district is positive for grades 4-8. It was not clear how the high school students are doing on statewide end-of-course assessments.

The applicant also included data from the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments. The information shows that student achievement is rising but the data did not show closure in achievement gaps.

The applicant gave the graduation rate increase for only one year from 2012-2013. The increase overall was 2.9%. The rates for most of the subgroups increased. Without additional data, it's not clear if this is a one time increase or a pattern occurring in this district.

No college enrollment data was provided in this section as a measure of success by the applicant. Section (A)(4)(d) had two years of college enrollment rates. There was a slight increase from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. Again, it's not enough years of data to show a pattern of success.

(b) The applicant mentioned that the lowest performing school was a "focus school" for not meeting the target for closing the achievement gap. The applicant listed interventions that have been implemented in all its schools such as having before and after school programs. There is not sufficient evidence regarding the lowest performance school for this reviewer to believe that the question was answered adequately.

(c) The applicant provided a list of venues for making data available to students, parents and educators, i.e. parents-teacher conferences. In many instances, the venue is one-way which is to inform and doesn't allow for the data to be used to improve participation, instruction and services. An example of this is publishing test scores in the newspaper. Other methods may provide ways in which the data may be used to improve participation, instruction and services. An example of this are the faculty, grade-level and departmental meetings with grade analysis.

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

The applicant provides transparency regarding it's budget and salary scales. They are posted on the district's web page. The applicant indicated that the information is also part of board meetings so is in the public record.

Salary scales are not the same as expenditures so the applicant did not provide the minimum required information. The information is not school specific.

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

10

4

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided information on the governance of education in Tennessee which includes federal law, state statues, State Board of Education rules and district policies. The applicant's response is not clear if the district has sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments. There is a statement that "a local board of education has the authority to manage and control all public schools established or that may be established under its jurisdiction. Therefore, most questions and concerns can only be addressed by local schools and school districts." Then a few paragraphs later, the applicant states that a "policy will be developed locally to meet all federal and state requirements." As a result of lack of clarity whether successful conditions and sufficient autonomy exist, points were reduced.

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

15

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provided evidence that teachers and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal. Not only did the director of schools visit each of the participating schools to inform teachers and receive their feedback, teachers also completed a survey regarding the proposal. The survey has 85% of the teachers in support of the proposal.

It is not clear why the applicant included information regarding students bringing their own devices to school and teachers having the option to enhance instruction with devices. Section (B)(4) is about stakeholder engagement and support. Having students bring digital devices to school does not mean they were engaged in the development of the proposal. The applicant did not provided any evidence that students were meaningfully engaged in the development of the proposal nor provided any feedback regarding it. Not having students as an engaged stakeholder resulted in points being reduced in this section.

The district provided shows on the local television station regarding Open Source and Proprietary Content. The applicant states that "Teachers, parents, students and community members provided feedback from the television shows, all of it positive." There was no evidence regarding how the feedback was obtained. In this reviewer's opinion, there is not enough evidence to consider the engagement of parent and students to be meaningful.

(b) There are numerous letters of support from stakeholders in the appendix. The Tennessee Department of Education reviewed the proposal and provided feedback.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners is to "provide an excellent curriculum via technology that will provide choices in each student's personal learning."

(a)(1) According to the applicant, these choices will lead to control or ownership of learning which supposedly helps students develop a sense of responsibility and self-motivation. This then leads to increased understanding of choices in achieving goals. It is not clear to this reviewer how these "choices" help students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

(a)(ii) Throughout this proposal, it is clear that the state's common core curricula standards are the foundation upon which learning will be built. The applicant states that "Any and all instructional resources through digital delivery will adhere to the

foundation of these national Common core Standards." This is definitely a strength of the proposal. The goals referred to in this section are the ones established by the State Board of Education and the project goals. The technology devices will allow students to track their own progress in mastery of the standards.

(a)(iii) This item was not addressed.

(a)(iv) The applicant states that the digital devices and resources will provide students access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. Beyond the statement and an example of a "news item would suggest a series of lessons on the culture...", it is not evident if this access and exposure will be incidental or purposeful.

(a)(v) The applicant states that students will "develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving." The Open Source and Proprietary Content will supposedly cause a change in the traditional teaching methods. This change in instruction is to support creativity and critical thinking. The applicant made these statements but provided little in explaining how this will happen.

(b)(i) The proposal says that strategies are in place so that each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content designed to help student achieve his or her individual learning goals. The strategies include every student having access to the common core curriculum via their digital devices. This is a strength of the proposal. It is not clear, however, how the student will know what his or her personalized sequence is in order to achieve his or her individual learning goals.

(b)(ii) The applicant believes that students will have access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments as a result of the digital learning. There will be discussion forums, chats, blogs and virtual field trips. How the applicant will determine if something is of high-quality was not provided.

(b)(iii) The intent of this proposal is to provide all students access to digital devices in order to provide digital content that is aligned with the common core standards. This includes Open Source and Proprietary Content. By providing these devices, equity will increase. Again, it is not clear how the applicant will know if something is of "high-quality" and actually aligned with the CCSS.

(b)(iv) Several places within Section (C)(1), mention that students, using their technology devices, will have the ability to access data to determine progress toward college- and career-ready standard and graduation requirements. With what frequency this will happen is not specified. In addition, there are various technology programs in each classroom that track student progress and provide data after each activity, i.e.. Classworks and Accelerated Reader. Feedback will also include personalized learning recommendations based on current assessment data such as the ACT.

(b)(v) The applicant provided strategies for high-need students to ensure they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. This includes having intensive 3-tiered intervention program and graduation coaches. The strategies mentioned will help high-need students keep on track. Though the applicant referred to the list as "accommodations and strategies," none of the items listed were actual accommodations. Within some of the strategies, however, there would be accommodations such as more time or simplified language.

(c) There are a few mechanisms mentioned for training and supporting students as they learn to use the tools and resources. Teachers and counselors will provide the training relating to understanding data and setting goals and strategies for growth. The applicant mentions computer/technology classes for all K-12 grade students. It is not clear if this is where students will learn how to use the technology devices and open source content. If this is where that training occurs, then it is important that every student is in technology class next school year.

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

20

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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) The proposal includes providing training on Open Educational Resources, propriety resources and technology devices for all teachers. This training will be differentiated and on-going. Teacher trainings will occur on professional development days, through team meetings, after school meetings and in summer inservice days.

The applicant does not specify what training-other than Open Resources and technology devices-educators will engage in that supports the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies to ensure all students are on time to graduate and college-and career-ready.

(a)(ii) For the most part, this proposal addresses the training needed to implement Open Source and use the technology devices. To what extent educators will be able to adapt content and instruction in response to student academic needs and

interest is not clearly explained.

(a)(iii) This criteria was not specifically addressed.

(a)(iv) The applicant provided information on the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) which includes classroom observations, student data and professional development. The TEAM is a system designed to support all educators so they help every student learn. Teachers receive feedback from their principals on job performance and their individual strengths and development needs. It appears that feedback and recommendations are provided to support improvement of practice and effectiveness.

(b)(i) The applicant is not clear on what actionable information educators will have to help identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. There is an assumption that the training provided to educators will teach them how to adapt instructional content to meet students' academic needs using the digital devices and open source and proprietary content. The information on learning approaches is vague.

(b)(ii) The emphasis of this proposal is to have high-quality digital learning resources such as Open Education Resources, available to students and educators. These resources are to be aligned with the common core standards. The district has numerous professional development opportunities, i.e. early release days and inservice days, for educators to receive training on the various resources and digital devices.

(b)(iii) The applicant did not address educators having access to processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. Most of (C)(2) is about the professional development and teacher evaluation system.

(c)(i) The applicant describes the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) which is a process for principals and teachers to work together to improve instruction. The TEAM uses classroom observations and facilitates a cycle of continuous improvement regarding instruction. Using information from this evaluation process to improve instruction and the teacher's effectiveness is good.

The applicant does not explain, however, how that information or other information helps improve or shape school culture and climate. The only other mention of school leaders and school leadership in Section (C)(2) is a description of the administrator's evaluation process. There is no explanation as to how information from the evaluation is used for improvement nor is there any specific training mentioned to help leaders.

(c)(ii) The applicant mentions that the "purpose of professional development for TCS is to strengthen and enrich classroom instruction and daily operations." Most of (C)(2) describes various professional development activities and opportunities. The proposal is vague on systems and practices for continuously improving school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing the achievement gaps available to school leaders and leadership teams. The applicant did not provide compelling evidence regarding this particular criteria.

(d) The applicant says it has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. This plan includes recruiting, retaining and rewarding those teachers. In this reviewer's professional judgment, the applicant did not provide that high-quality plan. It does not include the rational, specific activities, timelines and persons responsible. It does not address how the district ensures hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas have effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	4

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this reviewer's judgment, the applicant did not respond to section (D)(1) adequately and provide evidence that it has practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning:

- a) There was nothing provided regarding how the district's central office is organized to provide support and services to all participating schools. The applicant shared information on there being an annual professional development plan and types of professional development that happen. An example is classroom management techniques.
- b) No information was provided regarding school leadership teams in participating schools having any flexibility and autonomy.
- c) The applicant mentions some of the interventions available to the students such as STAR and that progress monitoring

is on-going. Information on earning credits based on demonstrated mastery was not addressed by the applicant.

d) The applicant did mention that there are Credit Recovery and Credit Repair programs in which students make up credits or work that they are missing. These programs use "Odysseyware" as the tool for providing the curriculum; it is interactive and has flexibility in differentiating instruction. This is the applicant's response to students demonstrating mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. In this reviewer's judgment, the districts does not give students multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate mastery.

e) There was no response to providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is some confusing language in this section. The applicant refers to "all of the districts in the consortium..." and "ENA is the Managed Internet Service Provider for all four school districts..." and "Chromebooks will be provided to all participating students in Tullahoma City Schools and in Lawrence County Schools as a result of this grant." This is the first reference to a consortium; the application was submitted for an Individual LEA Application.

In general, the applicant did not provide compelling evidence to show they have a district and school infrastructure which supports personalized learning:

a) In regards to having an infrastructure that supports personalized learning, the applicant mentions the need for more bandwidth in the schools and that the schools will offer extended library hours for students who need internet after hours. Having after hours access is a good strategy. The applicant, however, mentioned that the parents of students with wi-fi at home will be able to monitor and participate in their children's activities. This does not address how in homes without internet, parents will likewise be able to monitor and participate in their children's activities. The applicant does not ensure that all participating students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools and learning resources.

b) It appears that technical support is available in a variety of ways: peers, online support through School Station and direct technical support from additional technicians and trainers. The applicant did not clarify if this support is available to students, parents, educators and other relevant stakeholders.

c) The applicant will use Google Docs as their open data format for students and parents for writing, developing and exporting their ideas and learning assignments. There were several other electronic learning systems mentioned. It's not clear how all of these will work together.

d) It doesn't appear that this applicant has data systems with interoperability. It says schools will use the state's student data system. It doesn't indicate how the state system works connects with the district's online gradebooks at each school and several other electronic learning systems that have data, i.e. Classworks and Study Island.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not articulate a high-quality plan for a rigorous continuous improvement process. The applicant states that their continuous improvement cycle will consist of : implementation, gather and analyze data, adjust and improve, and share information. There is no description of what this looks like. There are no specific activities, deliverables, or timelines. The applicant mentioned that an external evaluator will be hired. Also, staff will analyze data at the building level on a continuous basis.

The applicant describes several electronic learning systems that will track progress toward improving student's achievement. Examples of these technology tools include STAR math, Classworks and ODYSSEYWARE. These tools will inform teachers what must be adjusted in classroom instruction. The applicant is making the assumption that instruction will be adjusted.

No specific information on monitoring and measuring was included. The applicant did share that the public will receive information on goal attainment annually through several methods.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described several ways in which internal and external stakeholders will receive communications. Information will be shared at meetings, through websites, newspapers and television events. It's not clear if there are any two-way communication processes. The actual plan is vague. It's not clear who is responsible for ensuring the communications occur. The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan.

There was some confusing information included in (E)(2). The last three paragraphs in this section include information on Rice University, Utah's expenditures, challenges relating to Common Core materials and transition plan for core curriculum. This reviewer doesn't understand why any of these items were included in this section.

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

The applicant provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures for both required measures and applicant-proposed measures. The applicant is using the annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in reading and mathematics set by the State of Tennessee as an academic indicator. The rationale for using physical activity as a performance measure and the connection to digital applications was helpful.

With some of the performance measures, there were subgroups listed with number of participating students and targets. Some of these subgroups have so few students that the applicant should be cautioned about FERPA requirements. When there is only 1 student in a subgroup, that becomes identifiable information and should not be publicly reported. If the RTTD applications are posted on ED's website, this particular application might have a problem with its subgroup data.

The applicant did not respond to criteria (b) and (c) in this section.

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

The applicant's plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the investments is not rigorous and of high-quality. The applicant listed the goals and the activities that will be evaluated. It's not clear what the process or methodology for evaluating those activities will be. The timeline that was provided was not a timeline relating to evaluation but rather to implementing the grant activities. The deliverables are related to implementing the grant activities, i.e. train teachers. One would expect a deliverable to be for example, an evaluation report.

The applicant did indicate that data analysis specialists will be hired to help with data collection and analysis. The hiring of an external evaluator was also mentioned. Having these positions, has the potential to help with evaluating investments and supporting the continuous improvement process.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a budget that is reasonable and sufficient to support its proposal relating to the acquisition of technology and moving to Open Source and Proprietary Content. For example, the equipment budget includes the purchase of Chromebooks and laptops. The applicant provided a per unit price for the Chromebooks and laptops and the anticipated number to be purchased. Individual hand-held devices are a key component of this proposal. Approximately 30% of the budget is for personnel; 54% for equipment; 11% for contractual services and 2% for travel.

The applicant identified funds from other sources that will be used to support the proposal including E-rate funds and state internet connectivity funds. The applicant also identified one-time and ongoing operational costs.

Earlier in the grant in Section (E)(4), it was mentioned that 4 data analysis specialists would be hired to lead the data

collection and analysis. These positions are not included in the budget. It's not clear how those positions will be funded.

The applicant included stipends for training in the Personnel line item rather than the "Training Stipends" line.

The applicant did not provide all the requested information in Budget Table 2-1: Overall Budget Summary Project List. Table 3-1 was not completed; however, since there is only one project, the information in Table 3-1 would be the same as Table 1-1.

In Table 4-1, the travel line mentions the Utah State Office of Education inviting "all districts and charter schools across the state to attend information meetings..." The applicant is from Tennessee; it's not clear why the reference is made to Utah.

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

The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant listed a few activities that will help sustainability such as redirecting textbook funding to replacement of student devices. It mentioned having the infrastructure in place. The applicant did not, however, articulate specific activities for ensuring they have the support from State and local government leaders other than to collaborate. They said they'll continue to rely on RTTT funds; this is soft money which doesn't help with sustainability. Soft money refers to grant money that is only available for a specific number of years.

The plan provided by the applicant is vague and lacks any timelines and persons who are responsible for the activities that are mentioned.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This applicant did not respond to the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

After reading this applicant's proposal, this reviewer does not believe there was compelling evidence that Absolute Priority 1 was met. Overall, this proposal was about purchasing technology--hand-held devices and upgrading the infrastructure--and using open source content instead of purchasing textbooks. The next steps seemed to be missing: what to do with the technology and open source content so that learning would be personalized and student learning would deepen and achievement would increase. The emphasis in this proposal was not on creating personalized learning environments.

Total	210	97
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Race to the Top - District



Technical Review Form

Application #0199TN-3 for Tullahoma City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The primary activity in the proposed project is developing and deploying open source instructional content. Recognizing that off-the-shelf instructional materials fail to meet the standards of the adopted Common Core curriculum, the applicant would use teachers and professional development to create lessons that are better aligned. The development of resources would be modeled after previous work done in Utah which produced materials better aligned to rigorous standards and eventually yielded a significant cost-savings to schools.</p> <p>It is unclear from the narrative how much time students will spend using the open-source content. In several places, the applicant describes supplemental proprietary materials that will be used in place of primary instruction. It is not clear that this is in any way different from how instruction looks now.</p> <p>One negative in this section is the statement that deploying electronic devices for students would eliminate the need for most course fees for students. These fees would appear to be an obstacle for lower-income students to access upper-level courses in the curriculum. Since project activities would not eliminate the fees completely (or reverse this policy), this statement lends concern to issues of equity.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant receives a score in the low range of points for this section.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant will make project activities available to students at all seven district schools. This includes a population of approximately 3,487 students, 54% of whom come from low-income families. Since the proposed project includes development and use of instructional content in all subjects and for all grade levels, it is appropriate that all student population is participating. Training for the proposed project activities will include all teachers and principals in the participating schools. As such, the applicant receives full points for this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant will immediately use RTTT funds to hire a technology/content specialist to help the district integrate the Common Core State Standards. This shows that the district does not already have such alignment in place, which will slow down the overall scale-up of project activities. Winter and spring of the first year of the project will include identification of existing proprietary content that is aligned to the standards as well as the purchase of technology to make available for student use the following school year. Unfortunately, this places selection of resources earlier in the timeline than alignment of instruction to the Common Core. In doing so, the applicant is not improving upon the existing model of textbook adoption with blind faith that publishers have sufficiently aligned their content. As such, the applicant receives a score in the low range for this section.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Looking at student performance on summative assessments, in many cases, the district saw a decline from the end of the 2011-12 school year to the end of the 2012-13 school year. Achievement gaps among subgroups increased in this span as well. The four year goals at the end of the grant show an increase from the 2012-13 baseline in all subject areas and a decrease in achievement gaps. However, in many cases, the gaps are still larger than those from data provided from the</p>		

2011-12 school year. Additionally, in some cases, the post-grant goals include targets below 50 percent. For example, the 2016-17 goal for 3rd grade reading/language arts is 49.6% proficiency. Grant goals include increases in graduation rates for all subgroups, and the applicant includes increased college going rates for all subgroups as well. However, the data provided comes with two concerns. First is that the applicant wants to see the overall college-going rate increase to 84%, but the Hispanic rate would increase only to 35%. While a smaller gap than before, this still represents wholly different expectations for this student population. Secondly is that the college-going rate would exceed student proficiency in high school subjects. Increasing the number of students going to college while not increasing the number of proficient high school graduates more than is suggested would not provide students the best chance for success once they get there.

Overall, serious flaws impact the score for this section, which receives a medium point assignment.

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	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides data showing growth in student achievement in fourth through eighth grades over the past four years. This excludes sixth grade scores which remained fairly flat. The applicant also provides data from the EXPLORE test showing significant student growth over time. It is unclear from the narrative, however, what initiatives have been undertaken by the district to create these gains. Overall on state tests for all grade levels, student pass rates in math have declined. This also undermines the case that the district is on an upward trajectory. Additionally, no evidence is provided to discuss the lowest performing district schools and additional supports that have been put in place to help them. While the district provides several examples of ways that student data are shared with parents, overall, the applicant receives a score in the medium range for this section.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant explains that budget information, including personnel and non-personnel expenditures are available via the district website and open records requests. While this makes the information available, it does not make it easily accessible or searchable. Although this shows a willingness to share budget information in all categories required in the criteria, this section receives a score in the middle range of points.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant quotes state statute giving local school boards authority over most aspects of decision-making. However, they do not specifically cite statutes or local policies that allow the reforms that are suggested by this grant. Specifically, since the district wants to develop content locally and bypass published materials, information about the state curriculum adoption process would be helpful to understanding any challenges that might arise from this practice. This section, being low in information, receives a low score for this section.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides selective notes from meetings with stakeholders throughout the past 16 months. Each meeting's discussion is summarized in a sentence or two, showing key points about the extent to which instructional materials are not aligned to the standards. These points do not include a mention of who attended the meeting or how the district publicized them. It is also not clear from the narrative that these meetings were specifically held in reference to the development of the application for the RTTT grant. Another concern is that the district is willing to allow electronic devices to be used in class "at the teachers' discretion." This does not promote the migration to digital and teacher-produced content described in the proposal. Letters of support from the Board of Education and city leaders are included, which speaks to basic community involvement. Overall, this section receives a score in the middle range of points.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a learning environment that includes a variety of digital learning supports, such as Accelerated Reader, that are already available. While these supplemental programs support direct instruction, none of them provide it. Nor are they representative of strategies that increase the awareness of students of why they learn what they learn. Also, while the applicant touts opportunities to showcase student work and the innovative learning experiences, this includes events such as open house nights and parent teacher conferences. These are routine events in any school calendar and not indicative of strategies aimed at increasing parental understanding of teaching, learning, or school reforms. The only discussion of diversity in the narrative is an explanation that students will have opportunities to learn about current events. There is no evidence that these experiences will bring about a greater awareness of diverse cultures. The discussion of the use of technology to track student progress does little more than restate the scoring criteria without providing concrete examples of how the availability and use of data will improve with RTTT funds. In all, this section falls short of the criteria on several levels, resulting in a score in the low range of points.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides elementary school teachers with three hours per week of professional development, while middle and high school teachers have seven days of professional development per year. It is unclear from the narrative how the district sets priorities for these professional development days or how it measures the extent to which it influences teacher behaviors. The state has adopted a five-point scale for evaluating teachers that includes three components: 50 percent based on observations, 35 percent based on student growth, and 15 percent based on test scores. Based on these factors, teachers currently average very high rates of effectiveness. It is not clear from the narrative, however, whether principals rate as highly, or how the applicant plans to increase the percentage of students who have access to highly effective teachers. As such, this section receives a score in the medium range of points.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes math, reading, and technology conferences that district staff get to attend each year. Overall, the narrative describes a professional development program that is proscribed from the district level and often determined a year in advance. The applicant provides support systems that are in place for students with disabilities and English language learners, but these are programs the district has purchased for general use. Overall, the applicant does not describe structures or programs that allow for self-driven or self-paced learning. As such, this section receives a score in the low range of points.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes how data will be housed and made available to parents. The narrative does not describe, however, how parents will receive training on the use of data, or how the district will ensure that income is not a barrier to participating. While providing Chromebooks to all students will give students access to digital resources while at school, there is no guarantee that all students will be able to access the Internet beyond the school day. The narrative does not mention the use of an interoperable data system. Overall, this section receives a score in the low range of points.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Rather than describing a continuous improvement process related to the proposed project, the narrative describes instructional supplements that are already in place (such as STAR Math) and how data from those programs are used to provide support for students. The applicant states that the administrative team will oversee all phases of the project but does not explain how this will impact the current duties they oversee. As such, this section receives a score in the low range of points.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant lists stakeholders that will be engaged throughout the life of the proposed project. These include opportunities to speak in front of civic groups and meetings with municipal leaders. The plan as described does not, however, provide a description of how the applicant will utilize feedback from the stakeholder groups. As written, the section receives a score in the low range of points.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant lists academic as well as non-academic performance measures. Many of the academic goals are tied to state goals for student achievement. The applicant does not explain why matching these goals, rather than leveraging the infusion of federal dollars from RTTT to exceed them, is appropriate. It is unclear from the narrative that the overarching goal of the developing content will lead to progress towards the desired goals. As such, this section receives a score in the middle range of points for this section.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's plan to evaluate the effectiveness of investments is more of a timeline and series of checklists than a set of procedures for determining whether purchases and activities are effective. Rather than utilizing a rigorous process for examining program expenses, the applicant will report to stakeholders whether milestones have been met. As such, this section receives a score in the low range of points.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant asks for just under \$7 million over the four years of the proposed project. The first and last years are the largest amounts. In the first year, equipment purchases make up most of the total requestes. The totals in the budget categories for the fourth year do not match the total cost for the fourth year. It is unclear what would drive the budget for this year up by more than \$1 million from the total of categorical expenditures. The budget also includes the purchase of proprietary content through contracts with pre-selected vendors. It is not clear how these vendors were selected or if the choices are indeed the best way to achieve project goals. It is also unclear how the applicant came up with the figure of \$20,000 of in-kind contributions for each year of the proposed project. Overall, the applicant receives a score in the middle range of points for this section.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The only strategy discussed by the applicant for sustaining the project after the four years of the grant is to divert textbook</p>		

funding to sustain and replace student devices. While this will be a necessary component beyond the four years of the proposed project, the applicant does not provide an idea of how much money this is. The applicant also does not address ongoing professional development and stakeholder engagement following the end of the grant. As such, this section receives a score in the low range of points.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant does not address the competitive preference priority; therefore, no points are awarded.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The proposed project centers around one idea: replacing textbooks with open source and proprietary content. While finding alternative and innovative approaches to content delivery is necessary with the transition to the Common Core State Standards, the proposal falls short on details, planning for professional development, and in terms of organization and structure. The proposal does not fully address the four core assurances or meet the absolute priority.		

Total	210	73
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**Race to the Top - District
Technical Review Form**

Application #0199TN-4 for Tullahoma City Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The vision behind the Tullahoma City Schools (TCS) proposal is based on the understand that one of the limiting factors that the school district faces is the lack of alignment between tested standards and the materials that were available for classroom utilization. In addition, available materials are costly, are not able to address new standards, requirements or scientific breakthroughs, and are not readily applicable to community or individual interests or needs. Another component that is a factor in the proposal's vision is that in rural Tennessee where TCS is located, many students deal with poverty and the lack of connectivity from the world they will enter after graduation or otherwise leaving the K-12 environment. The TCS grant application seeks to address these conditions by		

1. migrating from texts and related materials to a comprehensive “open source” system, supplemented with proprietary content and the expertise of area teachers in grades K – 5. The process would take place in an environment guided by CCSS and enriched by local needs, interests, and references. Adopting the open source concept, if applied properly by well trained and committed teachers, can have a positive impact on TCS students, both academically and motivationally.
2. delivering that “Open Source and Proprietary Content” digitally with devices that can also, for example, download and upload information and be used as a tool to ready students for online assessments as well as digital portfolios.
3. providing all participating students with access to applicable technology for use both in school and at home. It is noted that the proposal contains no provision for providing wifi or other accommodations for the large number of low-income homes in the district.

The TCS grant application provides a strong rationale for the focus of its proposal by referring to the work of the Utah Open Textbook. In the Utah application, “Open Source” curricular materials that were freely available to reuse, revise, remix and redistribute were made accessible to students. The relevant conclusions reached were: 1) Teachers were intimately involved in the instructional materials that students used on a daily basis, 2) those instructional materials developed by the teachers could also be amended to address new standards, requirements or scientific breakthroughs, 3) costs were dramatically less for the production of the “open source” materials, and 4) in the first iterations of the research no significant difference existed between the published work and those made available via “Open Source.”

The applicant proposes that teachers will build technology-enriched Open Source and Proprietary Content lessons aligned with the Common Core that have the potential to deepen educator knowledge of the standards, instructional practices, and the methods to create learning materials that are universally designed and personalized for students with the most significant learning gaps. Elementary grades (K – 5) will require proprietary content as well. Of concern is that the applicant does not provide sufficient time and support to accomplish this enormous task.

The proposal also describes how the project will mitigate access issues since all participating students will have access to the same instructional curricula and technology allowing texts to be customize to the community’s particular needs. This is a creative use of the opportunity presented by the technology.

Although this section did not discuss the recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, one of the four core educational assurance areas items, it has been the experience of several school districts that innovations of this kind tend to attract a larger and better pool of teacher candidates.

Overall, the TCS proposal’s vision articulates an ambitious approach toward accomplishing its goals. However, given the proposed amount of time and effort proposed to effectively prepare for and implement the project, it is questionable that the project would be achievable as proposed.

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

One hundred percent of the TCS student population will participate in the program including subgroups of Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged Students, Black, Hispanic, and Native American. This meets the eligibility requirements since 54% of the students in these seven schools (4 elementary, 2 middle and 1 high school) are from low-income families with individual schools ranging from 30.2% to 91.4%.

The applicant reports the total number of participating teachers (250), students (3,487), low income students (1888), and high-risk students (2379). Regarding the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, the applicant reports that teachers are observed multiple times by principals, and overall, the these observations average 4.04 out of a possible 5.0.

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

An early step in the district's reform plan will be that of employing a technology/content specialist to enrich and integrate the Common Core Standards with curricular offerings by adding local components and flavor that relate to the learners in the district. The applicant proposes to accomplish this in an Open Source and Proprietary Content environment that is subject to ongoing and immediate change. The logic model goes on to propose that teachers will build technology-enriched Open Source and Proprietary Content lessons aligned with the Common Core that have the potential to deepen educator knowledge of the standards, instructional practices, and the methods to create learning materials that are universally designed and personalized for students with the most significant learning gaps.

The applicant's contention is that by bringing technology accessibility to all students will improve student learning outcomes by providing digital access to Common Core curriculum in the hands of each of the district's students. More specific **goals of the project** are to

- Increase student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- Decrease achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- Increase high school graduation rates;
- Increase college enrollment

The applicant provides a timeline of activities to address these goals, but does not describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

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

A percentage, determined by the State Board of Education, of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), a set of statewide assessments given in Tennessee to measure students' skills and progress, is factored into the student's grades that inform the data reported for the Performance on summative assessments required by this criterion. Given the applicant's logic model and the state's yearly targets (AMOs) in reading and mathematics for each subgroup, school and district, these goals can be considered ambitious yet achievable.

The state has also set Gap Closure AMOs that are calculated so that the gap between the subgroup and comparison group is reduced in half over eight years. AMOs are set for each of the following subgroups and comparison groups: Economically Disadvantaged vs. Non-Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners vs. Non-English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities vs. Non-Students with Disabilities, Black/Hispanic/Native American vs. All Students. The proposal applies this method to its ambitious yet achievable Gap Reduction goals.

Graduation and college enrollment rate goals provided, based on the project's logic model, are also ambitious yet achievable.

It is noted that although optional postsecondary degree attainment goals are not provided, the project has the potential, through experience with equipment, software, and procedures used in most college courses, to facilitate a smooth transition to the collegiate environment.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Several factors across the past four years such as the change in systems of measurement for student performance and changes in the TCS community profile, has made it difficult to rely on district information to accurately display some of the data required for this criterion. Therefore, some of the data provided may not be reliable. On the other hand, some of the entries rely on the State of Tennessee's report "The Academic State of Tullahoma Schools" issued in December of 2012.

This report indicates that in the 6th grade Math and Science highest quartiles, Tullahoma scored second in the state. In the 2nd highest quartile, Tullahoma scored first in both Math and Science. In the third highest quartile, Tullahoma was tenth of 94 in Math and third of 119 in Science. In the bottom or 4th quartile, Tullahoma was first in Math and ninth in Science.

The composite TCAP scores for the district in grade 4 through grade 8 show growth for each year 2011, 2012, 2013 and the average of the three years progress with the exception of 6th grade. The sixth grade at both middle schools show the

least academic progress of all other grades compared to their previous year's scores in elementary school. TCAP Reading/Language grades 4 – 8 showed growth and substantial growth for three years and the average of the three years with the exception of 6th grade. TCAP Math shows an average of the three years that shows substantial growth in grades 4, 7, and 8 and just slightly below the standard for growth in grades 5 and 6. The conditions that contributed to these results are not provided, and would have provided a gauge of teacher growth potential.

The PLAN Composite Scores show that for 2011, 2012, 2013, and the three year average, the students in Tullahoma City Schools District made substantially more progress than the Standard for Academic Growth;

Regarding Graduation Rates, overall, the Tullahoma graduation rate increased 2.9% from the 2012 to the 2013 graduation classes; 2.7% for the White population; remained at 100% for the Asian population; 4.9% for the B/H/NA population; 5.4% for the Black population; 5.7% for the Hispanic population and 6.4% for the ED population; and 19.5% for the SWD population.

One TCS school is a “focus school” due to not meeting the target for closing the achievement gap for subgroups. The district has addressed this challenge by applying for state and foundation grants to provide additional intervention strategies, staff, and time beyond school hours to address individual students’ lack of adequate growth.

The district makes student performance data available to students and parents by means of, for example

- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Parent Nights when student work is showcased
- Hard copies of weekly reports; mid-term reports and report cards
- Classes to train parents in how to help students at home
- e-mails and phone calls
- posting student progress on-line in parent Ed-line accounts

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

The district’s web page supposedly offers links to the district budget on the TCS WWW homepage, however, access to the link was not provided as indicated in the proposal.

The applicant states that this information is available to anyone with internet access. However, given the low-income status of many people in the community, computers may not be available, and therefore, access is questionable.

Budgets are made available for district level regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration, but not on a school level, as called for by this criterion.

Although “actual” salaries are not provided, the 2013-14 Tullahoma City Schools certified and noncertified salary schedules are, and therefore may be extrapolated to actual salaries by school.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

TCS is subject to the reporting requirements of the United States Department of Education and works with the Tennessee Department of Education through the Race to the Top Grant and the No Child Left Behind waiver process to set and meet goals for annual academic progress for all of its students.

Pursuant to TCA Section 49-2-203, a local board of education has the authority to manage and control all public schools established or that may be established under its jurisdiction. Given that the TCS Superintendent, Board of Education President, and local teacher association president have signed the 201 RttT-D application, and that the Tullahoma system’s policy manual allows the district to operate within federal, state, and local mandates, it cannot be assumed by this that the applicant has conditions and autonomy under local requirements to implement this project, and that by inference, state legal, statutory, and regulatory approval exists.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Tullahoma’s Director of Schools meets with TCS building Principals, Assistant Principals, Department Heads (Special Education, Extended Day, Vocational Director, Maintenance, Food Services, Attendance, etc.) and Central Office Staff meet as a team on a monthly basis. From July, 2012 through August 2013, these meetings focused on “Open Source and

Proprietary Content” and “Digital Delivery” because of their relevance to the districts goals and plans. The meetings resulted in a decision to apply for the RTtT-D grant.

TCS does not have collective bargaining representation but does have an active teachers organization, the Tullahoma City Educational Organization (TCEA) that represents its members. Although there is no letter of support from TCEA, its president signed the application and the TCS Director of Schools visited the faculties of each of TCS’s seven schools to inform the staff of the project and receive feedback. In a survey of Tullahoma City School teachers, 85% strongly support or support this project, and 90% think that this project will benefit the students..

Two local television station programs about Digital Delivery of Open Source and Proprietary Content were shown in Tullahoma, in Lincoln County, in Coffee County and in Warren County. Teachers, parents, students and community members provided feedback from the television shows, all of it positive. Students’ responses were also enthusiastic.

A presentation about the project was made at the Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce, the noon Rotary Club, the morning Rotary Club, the Tullahoma Planning Commission, the Board of Mayor and Alderman, and the Tullahoma Board of Education.. Tullahoma Schools has had conversations with the Tullahoma Housing Authority and THA has developed several “hot spots” throughout the housing projects that are ready for students with digital devices.

There is no indication of any attempts at or need for revision of the proposal based on any group’s engagement and feedback.

Letters of support included in the Appendix from Tullahoma’s Board of Education, Tullahoma’s Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and others. Additional support is validated by compliance with the Tennessee’s Department of Education’s ten days of review and each local government’s access to the application for ten working days. Their comments are included in Appendix as well as a letter of support from Tullahoma’s mayor.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

An intent of the project proposed in this application is to provide the ability for students to have choices and to feel that they have some control or ownership over their own learning. Providing opportunity for choice is a feature of the Open Source and Proprietary concept because it opens up direct access to a variety of materials attuned to the specific needs of the individual student . If properly applied and supported, this access to choice can help students develop a sense of responsibility and self-motivation and increase their understanding of how their choices relate to their goals.

Another positive aspect of this project is that it can benefit high-need, at-risk, and economically disadvantaged learners in the district. These students have less access to technology in their home environment than their non-economically disadvantaged peers. Giving all students access to technology that can be taken home helps to lessen the achievement gap that may be the result of unequal access to appropriate methods of learning. This project would also provide teachers the resources to facilitate higher levels of engagement. All academic content could be delivered via the student’s personal device and every teacher would have the ability to tailor the content to best fit the needs of the learner.

Although the proposal points out that digital learning will facilitate discussion forums, chats and blogs, and allow students to access their own progress and scores, it does not provide enough detail regarding in what context these kinds of activities would occur or how they relate to individualized instruction. For example, how and when are both needs and results assessed, and how are the results of these assessments used to improve instruction and learning?

The proposal states that students would work in teams or groups, work on assignments of projects and problems, research individually or collectively, take tests, watch videos and challenge each other, and that students would have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. Accommodations and strategies for high-need students such as the RTI model to keep students on track for graduation are also included. These are all activities and processes that can and should take place without the project, although the addition of Open Source and Proprietary would make their provision more engaging, immediate, and flexible.

The proposal does describe how through the project, teachers can more readily facilitate instruction through challenging lessons that encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning. This is a positive aspect of the plan in that it can support creativity and critical thinking by giving students specific examples of real-life events and current situations.

Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Grade level teachers work with student to understand benchmark assessment and work with student to develop strategies for academic growth, and computer/technology classes are provided to all K-12th grade students.

The plan's anticipated benefits and its goals and timelines are clear, but some of its activities that relate to learning lack detail and/or are not dependent on the proposed project..

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

The applicant participates in The Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM), a state model that involves principals and teachers through a combination of frequent observation, constructive feedback, student data and professional development, allows teachers and school leaders to have an ongoing dialogue about instruction in the classroom and improving student learning. In addition, every educator has access to the NIET Best Practices Portal, which offers a range of resources that allow teachers and evaluators to develop programs and recommendations specific to individual focus areas.

The proposal's high quality plan for improving learning and teaching provides staff with different avenues for professional development. The plan involves formal training and teacher or staff initiated and follow-up training. Formal professional development is scheduled at particular times with a specific agenda, defined learning group, and predetermined outcomes. Formal training provides staff with content and instructional knowledge and skills as well as building their understanding of underlying content and knowledge of subject matter and curriculum. Teacher or staff initiated professional development centers around a specific topic, device or idea needed to enhance instruction or help make day-to day tasks more efficient. It is noted and commended that follow-up training is provided to ensuring teachers successfully use the skills and knowledge learned from the professional development, since it has been proven that doing so greatly enhances actual application into the classroom.

The plan also indicates that elementary school teachers are provided with three hours per week of professional development, and middle and high school teachers have seven "early release days" with professional development for three hours on each of these days. In addition, professional development is provided at the beginning of each school year before students arrive. Common core, technical training and other training for after school programs such as 21st Century Learning Programs occur during intercession and during the summer months. As part of the District's initiative to integrate more technology in the classroom without being platform specific, TCS partnered with Google to integrate Google Apps for Education.

It is the intent of TCS to provide training on Open Educational Resources (OERs), propriety resources and hardware devices aimed at integrating these types of resources into the daily environment. Teachers have been trained on Using Open Education Resources (OER) as a mechanism for instructional innovation and student utilization. CK12, Khan Academy and Brain Genie are a few of the OER that are currently being used across the district.

The applicant assures that all teachers in the district would undergo on-going training to ensure every teacher is fully equipped with the knowledge and ability to implement the resources and tools outlined in this grant proposal with fidelity. Teacher training would be provided at professional development days, through team meetings, at after school meetings and in summer inservice days. This training will include assisting students in becoming fluent with the technology, how to adapt the instructional content to meet students' academic needs, using the technology for project based learning, how to differentiate learning and instructional tasks using the student technology, how to use the student technological devices to engage students at high levels in their learning, and how to use the technology to ensure all students graduate high school being college and career ready.

High levels of student use of the technological devices will be a factor in the teacher evaluation process. The Evaluation Model for Teachers is based 50% on observation rubrics. Thirty-five percent is based on Student Achievement Data of students that they teach. The remaining fifteen percent is based on Student Growth. Teachers are observed multiple times by principals. The average score from these observations produce an Overall Observation Average of 4.04 out of a possible 5.0.

The plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals begins with recruiting, retaining and rewarding the best teachers available. The applicant is to be commended for providing a three-year induction program that includes pre-service training, ongoing professional development and support, and a dedicated and compensated mentor for each new teacher.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	4
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>TCS will designate an <i>administrative team</i> as the managers of the project, led by the Director of Schools. The TCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Special Education, and other Central Office staff and building principals arrange for and provide large and small group PD for teachers. The district CTE Director plans and coordinates training activities with the High school Principal and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. A Project Director will be hired to oversee the project.</p> <p>Economically Disadvantaged Students have access to individual instruction enhanced by technology with on-going progress monitoring. Programs are in place to serve the nearly 52% of the student population identified as high-risk. Some of the interventions that serve these students are universal screeners with capabilities of monitoring progress, measuring growth, and determining the grade level of skills. Individual Learning Plans (ILPS) are created based these instruments. Students at THS have opportunity before and after school and in summer school for to make up the credits in which they are deficient.</p> <p>No evidence is provided of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure, nor is evidence of school leadership teams having flexibility and autonomy over factors provided as required by this criterion.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has ensured that it has the proper infrastructure in place to support this initiative. This includes high bandwidth and an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that provides services in collaboration with 1:1 and Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD) initiatives. A Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity exists between school locations which link each network together for seamless integration of users and content.</p> <p>Chromebooks will be provided to all participating students. Schools will offer extended library hours for students who need internet at school after hours. Students with wi-fi at their homes will be able to access learning opportunities. It is of concern that no evidence is provided for accommodating students without wi-fi at their homes other than mention of several community businesses that offer free internet service which can be accessed after hours and on weekends.</p> <p>Online support will be available through the use of an online submission service for addressing technical support requests. Direct technical support will be available from the additional technicians and technology trainers whom will be hired through RttT-D grant funds.</p> <p>The school system will be enrolled in the Google for Education program in which students and parents can use the Google Docs option to write, develop, and export their ideas and learning assignments to an open platform. The students will be able to connect to Classworks, Study Island, and Khan Academy on their Chromebooks which will allow them to participate in these electronic learning systems.</p> <p>All schools will use student data as stored on the STAR student information system hosted by Tennessee Department of Education servers. Evaluation data will be stored using an online gradebook at each school. Instructional improvement data will be hosted by the Classworks, Study Island, and Khan Academy records of student progress available to teachers, students and parents.</p> <p>Other than the concern that no evidence is provided for accommodating students without wi-fi at their homes, the applicant has addressed the requirements of this criterion.</p>		
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E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a high-quality plan that provides the goal, activities, timelines and people responsible for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. Technology tools are in place that will track progress towards the project overall goal of improving students' achievement. These tools are, at the elementary school level, STAR Math, Early Literacy and Reading programs provide teacher with screening and monitoring tools for measuring students' progress with Common Core Standards (CCS). At the middle school level, Classworks' and Study Island's programs includes instructional activities to support mastery of CCS with several stages of assessments including pretests and benchmark tests to provide teachers with the data to drive instruction. At the high school level, ODYSSEYWARE has been implemented to provide an online instruction and assessment tool for students who for any variety of reasons are not succeeding in their regular classroom instruction. It is commendable that entracking will be differentiated at the various levels. Of concern, however, is the lack of detail as to how and by whom this will be done.

Through the project, TCS will employ additional technology staff to provide the services required for installation of the new tech devices and training for Open Source and Proprietary Content. At the building level, principals are provided feedback through assessment data reports provided by grade levels and/or subject areas. Staff will analyze this data at the building level on a continuous basis. At the district level, progress will be monitored each quarter. An external evaluator will be employed to provide assistance in successful implementation of the project.

The applicant proposes to provide a process for TCS students to get online by

- providing a parallel network which enables students to bring their own devices to school to access the Open Source and Proprietary Content
- accessing Open Source and Proprietary Digital Content and put it on students' digital devices.

Information on goal attainment will be shared publicly on an annual basis through postings on the system website and on social media, local news outlets, and school newsletters. Parents will attend school events that will serve as both information and training events about digital devices and Open Source and Proprietary Content curriculum. Information will also be shared through school websites and newsletters. Internal stakeholders are receiving ongoing communication through their principals.

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

Currently, all internal stakeholders are receiving ongoing communication through their principals and this process will continue at the Central Office and school level using multiple methods of communication so that all teachers, students and parents will remain informed throughout the grant cycle and beyond.

Parents will attend school events that will serve as both information and training events about digital devices and Open Source and Proprietary Content curriculum. Parents will stay informed through these events. Information will also be shared through school websites and newsletters. It is proposed that Community groups will be given opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback on the program.

Students at each school will showcase Open Source and Proprietary Content at events where parents and the community are invited. The results of the external evaluator will be shared with the community. TCS will continue to use the local newspaper and the television station to disseminate news to the community.

Although the audiences and methods of providing ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, no indication is given regarding how feedback will be solicited, analyzed, and used to continuously improve the TCS plans.

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

The applicant uses for its Academic Performance Measures, the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) set by the State of Tennessee in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for each district according to grade level and subgroup.

All performance measures and goals for K-3, 4-8, and 9-12 are Ambitious yet achievable annual targets, are provided for subgroups, and provide a rationale for inclusion.

It is noted, however, that tables indicating Performance Measure for All Applicants – a and b, provide data for teachers and principals in total, not by subgroups, as required by the criterion. Also, no evidence is provided as to how the measure will

provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to TCS's proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern.

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

The applicant presents a well-organized, comprehensive, and detailed approach to continuously improve its plan. It includes student subgroups and goals to be evaluated, which include, for example

- Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics; and
- Increasing high school graduation rates.

Activities of the project to be evaluated are listed. Those especially noteworthy because they may lead to adjustments and revisions include

- Providing sustainable funding for devices so students can have full access to the technology they need to take advantage of digital materials;
- Revising any needed policies and practices at the school district level that encourage the use of digital resources;
- Equipping all staff through professional development for new and existing teachers that prepares them to use digital educational materials effectively, both in their own classrooms and for their own professional development;
- Site evaluation of technology programs that have been selected as tools will be undertaken by building level staff;
- Data Analysis Specialists will be hired to lead on-going, continuous data collection and data analysis;
- TCS will designate an administrative team as the managers of the project, led by the Director of Schools;
- An external evaluator will be employed to provide assistance in successful implementation of our project. The evaluation will be based on the implementation of the project as described in the activities, timeline and deliverables above; the collection and analysis of data.

Logical timelines are proposed. Deliverables that align with the project goals are clearly described. For example: "Open Source and Proprietary Content textbooks written and synthesized by experts, vetted by peers, and made available online for access, downloading, and use by all students. These texts can be updated as needed rather than on a publisher's schedule."

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed budget reflects the costs to acquire the expertise to manage and facilitate Tullahoma's Open Source and Proprietary Content Project, content curriculum personnel to develop the e-books, funds for an external evaluator for each year of the project, stipends for teacher training days beyond the regular school calendars, and the necessary travel costs and equipment for the project.

The expenditures are appropriate for TCS to provide human capital expertise in a transition from a textbook based curriculum to a digital opensource curriculum. The district expects to find permanent positions within the system through attrition of staff over the 4 years of the grant. Traditional textbook costs will be applied to the sustainability costs of the project once grant funding ends..

The only non-grant funds are the annual \$20,000 contribution of the TCS infrastructure that it had designated to directly support the grant project.

The grant will provide the following one-time investments:

- Digital devices for student use;
- Equipment to upgrade wired network (switches, extra fiber optics, expansion modules for existing equipment); and
- Laptops to support student tablets and provide additional access for teachers and students.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not proposed a high-quality sustainability plan for the project described in this application. The proposal states that Tullahoma's technology director and his staff will continue to provide the infrastructure, devices and training to infuse technology into instruction as a natural tool part of teaching and learning, but does not indicate under what circumstances, and it is not clear that the staff will be prepared to do so. The majority of the infrastructure is in place for students to use approximately 300 devices that have been secured through the technology budget and grants and for students to bring their own devices

The intent to redirect textbook funding to support replacement of student devices and to continue to collaborate with the local board of education and with the Tennessee Department of Education to assure supportive policies and processes for transition to, maintenance of and growth of the Open Source and Proprietary Content learning and digital delivery; seems to be the applicant's sustainability plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

There is no evidence of this section in the application.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not met Absolute Priority 1 by virtue of failing to adequately provide for effectively preparing and utilizing the open source to personalize learning.

Total	210	133
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