



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0032LA-1 for Winn Parish School Board

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>The applicant describes a reform vision that has some notable aspects and that, to some degree, builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. Teams of teacher leaders and other district staff will align curriculum and content resource with CCSS and common unit assessments. They will also develop assessments to measure growth toward Student Learning Targets (SLTs) in the core academic areas. The applicant notes that school leaders and teachers will be involved in professional development sessions that will be personalized and include activities embedded in an individual's specific job tasks. A goal of increasing parental engagement with school by providing focused training and support to parents is also described.</p> <p>However, the vision does lack some specificity in articulating a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. For instance, the applicant notes that to employ high quality teachers it will communicate on a regular basis with key personnel in education departments at regional universities to identify prospective teacher graduates. No information was found regarding how this will assist the district in ensuring that teachers hired will be of high quality. It also does not addresses how this will assist in hiring experienced teachers, only those who have recently completed their teacher preparation. The applicant also says that it has enhanced data systems that measure student growth and success by providing information for principals and teachers to use in improving instruction and says that will be done by using Response to Intervention as the primary method of accomplishing that task. RtI is designed primarily as a remediation program for students at risk and as prerefferal system for special education. No information was found regarding how the applicant will use it as a school-wide system for all students.</p> <p>The applicant also fails to provide sufficient detail regarding what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers who participate in the personalized learning environments that it will develop as a result of this project. As a result of a lack of information regarding its approach to accelerating student achievement and describing its vision for how the classroom experience will be changed for students and teachers, a score in the mid-range is appropriate for this criterion.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities and the total number of participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators. It proposes to serve 2507 students distributed across seven schools. Proposed schools consist of those at primary, middle, and high school levels. The distribution of students appears to meet the required percentage of low-income (1755) and high-need students (1755). There will also be 172 educators participating in the project. However, no information was found regarding how the applicant selected the schools that will participate in the project.</p> <p>The applicant does not convincingly explain how its approach will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of its proposal. The applicant notes that district personnel worked as a team to analyze the current leadership skills, curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices in place at individual schools. After this review, the team concluded that all schools in the district have existing needs. However, there is no discussion of the criteria or process that was used to determine this.</p> <p>Based on the lack of thoroughness in describing how it approached identifying and selecting schools to participate in the project, this criterion merits a score in the middle range.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>No information was found to address regarding a high-quality plan describing how the applicant's proposal for school reform will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, and that will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. No logic model or theory of change was described in terms of how the applicant's plan will improve student learning outcomes for students, neither was this information found elsewhere in the application. Therefore, no points were awarded for this criterion.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant identifies goals for student outcomes that are ambitious. Goals were identified and described for summative assessments, graduation rates, college enrollment and for decreasing achievement gaps. Content areas of literacy, math, social studies, science and English/language arts/reading are analyzed in terms of baseline levels of student achievement. Goals for some schools in some content areas are projected to increase significantly over the time period of the project. For instance, the subgroup of special education students is projected to increase from 10% to 88% after the conclusion of the grant. It does appear that the goals identified by the applicant, although very ambitious, are achievable based on activities described by the applicant in its proposal. For instance, the focus on professional development for teachers should improve the quality of instruction available to students.</p> <p>However, a lack of narrative makes it difficult to determine the appropriateness of some goals. For instance, in the table under (A)(4)(a) it is unclear if the goals relate to number of students or some other measure. In addition, little information was found regarding how proposed goals compare to State ESEA targets. Due to the applicant's addressing the required goals, but not providing enough information to determine if all of the goals are appropriate, this criterion is scored in the high end of the mid-range of possible scores.</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
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant shows some progress in improving student performance over the previous four years. One of the target schools improved its School Performance Score over 15 points during this time period. Lack of information regarding how School Performance Scores are determined, what factors are examined, and what the total possible points are, makes it difficult to determine the applicant's areas success and needs and the level of improvements obtained. No information was found regarding specific areas of student learning and achievement and the district's success in closing any gaps.</p> <p>No information was found regarding the applicant's success in achieving reforms in lowest-achieving or low-performing schools. The applicant describes a discrepancy between teacher proficiency scores and student achievement and a need to do a better job of more accurately evaluating teachers. However, no information was found regarding how the teacher proficiency scores were obtained.</p> <p>The applicant does describe a system for making student performance data available to students, educators and parents. However, due to the lack of information regarding how this will improve participation, instruction and services, as well as specific areas of student learning and achievement and the district's success in closing any gaps, this criterion is scored in the low-range of possible scores.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Personnel salary schedules are available at the school level for instructional staff and teachers. The system's personnel evaluation plan is available on the District's website. State law requires that salaries of all public employees be available for public review upon request.</p> <p>However, the applicant does not sufficiently describe a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and</p>		

investments. Although personnel salary schedules are available, information was not found regarding how the applicant makes actual personnel salaries available at the school level, or how it is made available to parents and students. No information was found regarding the availability of non-personnel expenditures at the school level. Due to this lack of detail this criterion is scored in the mid-range of possible scores.

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

10

6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant appears to have sufficient autonomy under the State's requirements to implement personalized learning environments. The State's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) exercises regulatory control over many aspects of the local school district operations. But, the applicant reports that BESE is supportive of local initiatives to use its discretion in implementing innovative approaches to improving student learning. However, the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence regarding how it will ensure conditions for sufficient autonomy at the local level. Based on the applicant's description of its autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in its proposal and the inadequate evidence regarding local conditions for autonomy, this criterion is awarded points in the mid-range of those available..

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

15

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports that stakeholders from the school district collaborated to determine whether to pursue funding for this project and that the Mayor provided a letter expressing his support. However, other specific stakeholders are not identified, individually or by category. No other letters of support were found. Information was not found regarding how the collaboration reported by the applicant occurred, or if and how the proposal was revised based on stakeholder engagement and feedback. Nor was information located regarding how teacher support was obtained or the level of that support.

Based on the lack of information regarding how all stakeholders, including parents and teachers, were engaged in the development of this proposal, and lack of documentation of stakeholder support, this criterion is scored in the low range of possible scores.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	9

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a plan that has a number of very effective approaches to improve student learning and achievement and reports that decision making for curriculum changes and its evaluation will be data driven. The applicant demonstrates an understanding that immediate action must be taken to ensure an aligned curriculum is in place and effectively implemented throughout the school year and identifies three things that must in place to accomplish this.

- The values and beliefs people in schools have about what is worth doing and what it is possible to do.
- The structural conditions under which the work is done.
- The use of job-embedded coaching, modeling and a gradual release of responsibility.

To accomplish this, teacher teams will build study units and performance tasks within the content domain that focus on solving authentic problems, creating lessons that address assessed needs. Feedback conferences are used with teachers to review data, identify needs, gain a commitment to work on specific areas in need of improvement, and identify the strategies for use in the improvement process.

To ensure that students pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements, the applicant will utilize resources from another grant project. Although no information was found regarding the source of this grant, the applicant refers to it as the TRF grant. The current emphasis of this grant is a STEM/CTE initiative, focusing on 21st Century skills, Project Based Learning, Distance Learning, Career Awareness, Science Excursions and Math Constructive Response items. In order to address STEM related concepts, a myriad of professional development workshops and trainings have been provided to all instructional employees – the superintendent, supervisors, principals and teachers.

However, the applicant does not present a plan regarding how it will help students to understand if what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, or to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, or to understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals.

In addition, the applicant does not describe how the project will assist all students in understanding that what they are learning is critical to their success or how their plan will assist students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. While problem-based learning is identified as a component of the curriculum, the applicant doesn't fully describe how it will help students develop skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, or how students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. No information was found on how the applicant will ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students to help them understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

The applicant does describe activities that will provide frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

The applicant also provides information regarding personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and available content, instructional approaches, and supports. For instance, the applicant describes resources and services to address high-need learners. Tutoring is available for students at the schools and the Title I Parent Center. The School Improvement Plan, which is based on the unique needs of each school, drives instructional strategies and activities because it. Also, the TRF grant provides the district with a Graduation Coach who works with at-risk high school students.

However, due to the lack of information describing how the applicant will connect individual assessments and data with specific resources and services to assist high-need students, and a description and how the applicant will ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students to help them understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning this criterion is scored in the mid-range of possible scores.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes several programs that it has developed and implemented to improve student achievement: Early Childhood Program, PreK classes, Project Read, DIBELS, Credit Recovery, remediation classes, summer school for fourth and eighth grades, Connections, industry-based certifications, Five Year Educational Plans, Dropout Prevention Plans, Ninth Grade Initiative, DARE programs, Character Counts Programs, and Title I Tutoring are among those discussed. New teachers attend training on district policies and procedures, components of effective teaching, and are assigned a mentor at their school to aid and assist in their first year. High expectations for student learning are reinforced through the principal's weekly walk-throughs and monthly Administrators' Meetings in schools that include classroom visits by the District Leadership Team.

The applicant identifies a variety of possible activities and issues to be addressed and implemented to equip teachers to improve and maximize student learning. In the previous section of its proposal the applicant also describes a process for identifying professional development needs and for meeting those needs. Through the Professional Learning Community, lead teachers, supervisors and principals will provide continuous assistance with selecting and implementing new strategies and methods. Teachers will be chosen to attend in-services, workshops, and conferences and to redeliver what is learned to other teachers in faculty meetings or district level PLC's.

Job-embedded professional development will be conducted with lead teachers and whole-faculty study groups to support curriculum and instruction that involves higher order thinking skills, diversity, remediation and intervention. To help ensure that knowledge and skills from professional development activities are implemented in the classroom, the Superintendent requires supervisors and principals to be present in the schools and classrooms, assessing the quality of instruction and efforts toward continuous improvement in student achievement.

The above are all elements of an effective plan. However, the applicant's plan lacks specificity in terms of how it proposes to adapt content and instruction, provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and appropriate learning approaches. In addition, the applicant does not describe how it will measure student progress on a regular basis in meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and use data to accelerate student progress and improve of the practice of educators.

No information was found regarding how the applicant will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by

using feedback provided by the teacher and principal evaluation systems, including frequent feedback on teachers individually and as a group, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement. The applicant also does not adequately address how it will increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

As a result, the applicant does not adequately describe a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas such as special education. The applicant does describe some activities and approaches that should lead to significant improvements in student achievement but, it does not adequately address such issues as using teacher feedback to improve instruction, or how it will provide opportunities for students to engage in tasks in response to their academic needs. Due to the lack of detail regarding these critical elements of its plan, this criterion is scored in the mid-range of available scores.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant describes a strong plan to put in place practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. The central office is organized to provide support and services to all participating schools. The School Board will participate in hands-on activities to facilitate its understanding of how to help schools achieve success by sustaining policies and developing policies that support implementation of these effective teaching and learning practices. The Board will engage in instructional discussions about data. A Systemic Rubric will help Board members understand how data reports provide pertinent, on-going feedback to schools on how to effect change to improve academic achievement. The applicant also reports that the School Board will provide school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.</p> <p>School site administrators will identify key leaders and establish collaborative teams to implement effectively a collaborative school improvement process throughout the organization. The teams will have responsibilities to address school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school level budgets. A detailed chart is provided describing the details of how these teams will operate.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant describes how it will allow students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, by providing them with opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. The applicant has developed a Pupil Progression Plan that documents policies and procedures it has put in place to ensure that students are able to master standards and provides the state and district policies and their interpretation to parents concerning placement, attendance, grading, promotion, retention, acceleration, remediation, alternative programs and settings and other policies that may be applicable to students.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe adequately how it will provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. For instance, the use of digital learning as a way to adapt instruction and make it more accessible is not addressed. For this reason, this criterion is scored in the mid-range of points available.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a number of approaches that should be effective to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. The district will make data regarding school and student achievement available to stakeholders. Data results comparing student performance to national norms, state accountability data reports, district reports describing student performance, school-level student performance data, and teacher reports of daily, weekly, and monthly progress of students are distributed to the appropriate stakeholders. Data provided by state reports about the district and its schools are gathered by the appointed district supervisor, collated, arranged in a logical reporting format, and shared with all administrative personnel. School administrators take school-specific data to their respective faculties to be further studied and analyzed. Teachers work collaboratively to study classroom and/or course content data and individual student data. Teachers show students how to interpret their data. The superintendent shares district and school wide data to

stakeholders via newsletters, newspaper articles, community presentations, open houses, and community meetings. This should help ensure that participating schools use interoperable data systems (systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data).

The applicant does describe an infrastructure that has the potential to provide students and educators with support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. For instance, teachers are given access to state test results, and, according to the applicant, they immediately analyze the data to begin the school improvement planning process for the future. Ongoing student-achievement data are readily available for parental information via the Parent Command Center. Teachers post academic information on individual students to a digital grade-book, and those grades are available at all times to those with the security clearance. Progress reports are distributed at the mid-nine-week point and at the end of each nine-week term. Parents can also view state test results from each year that their child is tested. The district website has links to the Parent Command Center, online resources for parents, state and district report cards, and links to individual schools.

However, the applicant does not provide sufficient explanation regarding how it will ensure that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of this project. The applicant does not adequately discuss how all parents, including those without technology resources or Internet access, are able to access data or how individual student data is shared and explained to parents of high-need students, including those with limited English proficiency skills. There is little description of how the applicant will use information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. Based on this, the score for this criterion is in the mid-range of possible scores.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant describes activities and procedures it uses to monitor the effectiveness of instructional activities and steps it takes to use data to make needed revisions and modifications to teaching and learning in the classroom. Throughout the year, collaborative teams from the school and district levels meet to discuss curriculum, instruction, student performance, and assessments. Team meetings are structured vertically and horizontally by grade level or content area. All decisions made concerning the adjustments are based on data-behavioral, contextual, attitudinal, or cognitive. Weekly lesson plans identify lesson objectives, concepts, activities, assessments, and other data. Principals and supervisors review lesson plans and complete walk-throughs to ensure fidelity to the vision and mission of the instructional process. Third and fourth grade teachers meet twice a month to study data, analyze curriculum, and write benchmark assessments for ELA and math. The applicant reports that this has resulted in better instruction for fourth grade ELA and math. However, this is a more general description of what the applicant is doing now, and does not relate directly with how it plans to evaluate progress toward goals identified by this project.</p> <p>The evidence above indicates that the applicant does have a plan for implementing a continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. However, where the plan falls short is in describing a high-quality plan regarding how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments resulting from this project in such areas as professional development, technology, and staff. Nor does the applicant address how it will incorporate feedback into improvement of the project activities once it has identified areas that need improvement. For these reasons, this criterion is scored in the low-range of possible scores.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides some evidence of a plan to communicate and engage with stakeholders. The applicant notes that a collaborative team that includes all stakeholders will develop a plan of action with progress monitoring for effective and ongoing communication and engagement with external stakeholders. The applicant also reports its intent that parents and community will be welcome volunteers to take part in the classroom. According to the applicant, these volunteers will be made fully aware of the expectations of educators and students and be expected to help meet those expectations.</p> <p>However, the plan presented does not rise to the level of a high-quality plan. No information was found regarding a specific</p>		

plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant states that the Leadership Team comprised of lead teachers, administrators and other staff will develop a plan aimed at developing and monitoring the ongoing communication and engagement of internal stakeholders. But, no explanation is given for what that plan might be and how it will involve and engage external stakeholders, as well as employees of the school district. For these reasons this section is scored in the low end of the mid-range of possible scores.

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

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ambitious measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures and the performance measures are linked to State accountability measures. These measures should be achievable based on the information supplied in this proposal regarding planned activities and approaches to be implemented in this project. A rationale for selecting these measures is provided. According to the applicant, these measures were chosen because they are used as a tool to determine effectiveness and normed within the state with like schools. Information is also provided regarding how the measures chosen provide timely and formative information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. Grade-level or subject area data meetings to discuss progress towards benchmarks will be held and will include four checkpoints during the year with school leaders to review progress and make any adjustments considered appropriate. All students will be tracked according to the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal is an effective or highly effective teacher and an effective or highly effective principal.

However, the applicant does not describe how it will review and improve a particular measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. Nor does the applicant fully explain if teachers and principals are effective or highly effective in relation to the criteria for this project. The plan for how performance measures will be monitored for individual students is not adequately described. It is not clear if the health care performance measures are to increase by 8% each year, or just increase 8% over their beginning level. No baseline data was found for this. The health care performance measure focuses on an increase in health care use rather than on a true performance measure. No information was found regarding one measure of career-readiness in order to assess the number and percentage of participating students who are or are on track to being career-ready. For these reasons, this criterion is scored in the mid-range of possible scores.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does describe some important elements of a plan to evaluate project activities. It proposes to purchase a product that will be specifically structured to support a dynamic cycle of continuous improvement. Every professional development plan will be built in response to need, based on real data rather than assumptions and fixed-learning progressions. The system design is to be flexible, allowing plans to be readily modified in response to outcomes. At the end of each project year, an audit or evaluation will be completed to define the results of the project in a written document that compiles data during the project. The report will outline goals and recommendations for continued actions to develop the process as the school/district goes forward. The report is to be organized by categories and include sections with supporting data reports. These findings and recommendations are provided for collaboration with the teams from each school and can be used to further the growth of each school's project.

However, the plan described does not rise to the level of a high quality plan. No information was found regarding the specifics of an evaluation plan that describes the data to be collected, how and when it will be collected and who will be responsible for collecting it. Evaluation data and collection methods are not specifically linked to project activities. As a result, the rigor of the evaluation plan cannot be fully determined. For these reasons, this criterion is scored in the mid-range of possible scores.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant Identifies all funds that will support the project and does a thorough job of explaining proposed expenditures

for the project and how those expenditures are linked to project goals and activities and described in the proposal. For instance, the plan is heavily populated with the services of expert consultants in the areas of leadership, teacher coaching, special education and instructional services for struggling students, namely English learners and students in the Response to Intervention process and those activities are key elements of the applicant's proposal.

The applicant intends to contract with national vendors who will provide a series of training annually of principals, lead teachers, and classroom teachers, and follow-up the training with on-site school and classroom visits to ensure implementation of practices through modeling and coaching, and to build the capacity of leaders and teachers to replicate these practices. Expenditures related to these activities are included and explained in the budget detail.

In addition, consultants will work with teacher leaders on the alignment of curriculum and common assessments, which will support them in becoming masters of creating course content. The applicant does not anticipate requiring any additional funds to sustain the project after grant funding ends. An online professional development library that will sustain professional development and rely on useful instructional and pedagogical content will also be included in the two lowest performing schools.

However, a weakness in the applicant's budget section is the lack of information regarding any additional funding that will be utilized to implement project activities. In addition, no information was found regarding the specific details of the expenditures to be paid to consultants in terms of how the nature of those services will be linked to specific project objectives and activities and how the costs to be incurred were determined to be appropriate and necessary. This lack of information makes it difficult to fully determine if the budget is reasonable and feasible to support proposed objectives and activities. For these reasons the applicant does not merit the full number of points available for this criterion.

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

10

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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a sustainability plan that focuses on ensuring that highly qualified personnel provide rigorous and relevant instruction. Continued improvements in the district and schools are planned to build the capacity of personnel so that the project will exist without assistance. The applicant expects that the continuation of the project will require no additional funding as it plans for district staff to provide needed ongoing training and coaching in subsequent years. In addition, it is anticipated that some traditional curriculum costs will gradually decrease therefore allowing for funding of additional digital supports.

The applicant did not address any anticipated additional support from State and local government leaders, financial support, nor does the applicant describe how it will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. Although the applicant states that it believes that no additional funding will be needed to sustain the project's activities after the end of grant funds, it does not describe a detailed plan for ensuring that this occurs. Teachers and administrators will be trained and will, in turn, provide training on an ongoing basis after the project funding ends. But, a process for establishing and maintaining this plan is not described. Based on the lack of a detailed plan for ensuring that the project will be sustainable without project funding this criterion is given a score in the mid-range of possible scores.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does a very limited job of describing a plan to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. The applicant describes some elements of a coherent and sustainable partnership to support the objectives and activities described in Absolute Priority 1 that it has formed with public or private organizations. There is some level of collaboration and support with the community to integrate public or private resources in a partnership. The applicant states that it works closely with community organizations and civic clubs. The district continues to have representation on the local Chamber of Commerce. This alliance has led to positive relationships with business partners as they work to improve the local workforce. A partnership with the Huey P. Long Technical College has allowed the district to provide additional vocational training for students, as well. Representatives from the technical college serve on the district's Carl Perkins Advisory Committee and representatives from the district serve on advisory panels for the technical college, as well. Through this partnership and the support of the community, the district has developed plans to improve the

dropout rate in the parish. The local Lions' Club works with school and district personnel to provide glasses for needy children, while the Pilot Club promotes literacy in the schools.

The applicant identifies 10 population-level desired results for participating students as a result of this priority that align with and support the applicant's broader proposal. However, the applicant does not adequately describe how it will track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children in the participating schools, or if it will use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students. In addition, the applicant does not show evidence that it has developed a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students. There is also a lack of information regarding how the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services for participating students.

The applicant does provide a description of some effective activities and objectives for building the capacity of staff in participating schools, but it does not adequately explain how it will identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community, create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students, engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs, or routinely assess its progress in implementing its plan.

In general, the applicant does not describe a structured, coherent, and articulated plan to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. Partnerships and relationships with other entities, public or private, are not connected with specific objectives and activities of this project as described in the applicant's proposal. While the applicant does describe some very useful activities and resources to collect and use data to improve student performance, this description does not include an extensive and meaningful partnership with other organizations, agencies or businesses. For these reason, the applicant is given a score in the low-range of possible scores for its Competitive Priority plan.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant does describe efforts and plans to align curriculum and instruction with college- and career-ready standards, it does not describe a coherent plan to create learning environments designed to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies tools, and supports for students and educators. Insufficient detail is contained in the plan to determine if the applicant will be able to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student.

The applicant does present a plan to increase the effectiveness of educators and expand student access to the most effective educators through focused professional development of teachers and other staff, but professional development is the primary focus of the plan in general. Details are not provided regarding how the applicant will connect and build upon the professional development to decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Insufficient information is provided regarding a comprehensive plan to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. How learning environments will be modified and accessed by all students, in particular high-needs students, using tools such as technology, data systems and parent and community engagement is also not sufficiently explained by the applicant.

Based on these factors, the applicant has not met the requirements for Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	92
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0032LA-2 for Winn Parish School Board

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides evidence of concrete ways in which it plans to build on the 4 core assurance areas in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While transitioning to PARCC and CCSS, the district documents that it will assist schools in aligning curriculum/resources and assessments, provide personalized professional development and address counseling and parental engagement to personalize the academic and career advisement. • Data systems will be utilized by Professional Learning Communities and the Response to Intervention programs will be strengthened in all schools. • To strengthen principals and teachers, the district describes ways in which they will utilize coaches and mentors, methods of recruitment as well as retention and rewards systems and will continue to implement the LA evaluation model. • In addressing low performing schools, the district believes the above research based practices will accomplish turnaround. <p>The district outlines plans for the core educational assurance areas which will build on the work they have begun and provide the teachers and leaders with additional supports during the transition to Common Core State Standards. However, the application lacks a clear and credible approach to how these assurances will be implemented in order to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity grounded in individual tasks and based on student academic interests.</p> <p>Additionally, a description of what the classroom experience will be like in a personalized learning environment is undocumented. Thus the district scores in the low range on indicator A(1) as it fails to articulate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district describes the process completed by the district in determining that all schools will participate. A committee of district personnel conducted an assessment of individual schools and determined all had areas of need. Therefore, all 7 schools will participate. A national company will be brought in to fulfill professional development needs. These experts will engage the district staff in a hands-on method of professional development that is tailored to the needs of each school/staff. This will ensure high quality implementation both at the school and district levels. The demographics of the whole district are provided for total students, low income students, high needs students and participating educators. Thus, the district earns a score in the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district did not address indicator A(3) in it's application. While the district's application does detail a plan for full district implementation from the onset, there is no evidence provided in the application to demonstrate a high quality plan of how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform beyond the participating schools. Thus, the district earns no points on indicator A(3).</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district lacks a narrative to provide a rationale for the goals it has set in the various schools on each assessment. While the narrative does state that the methodology for determining growth was the achievement levels as designated by the state for % proficient, the charts are unclear as to what the state target is. Hence, it cannot be determined if the goals set by the district are equal to or exceed the targets set by the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the overall achievement level category, all schools are expected to reach a level of 150 by the post grant year. Some schools will be starting at a baseline in the 80s to achieve that goal whereas others are at a baseline of 120. The baseline score for the district as a whole is reported as 67 however, the baseline scores for the schools provided in the chart are inconsistent with that district baseline. In the Literacy Proficiency Category, all schools are expected to reach a level of 90% proficient by the post grant year. Some schools will be starting at a baseline in the 60s while others are in the 80s. In the Math Proficiency Category, some schools are expected to achieve 80% while others are expected to achieve 90%. One school, Calvin, is already at 90% but isn't expected to grow at all. In the Social Studies Proficiency Category, some schools are expected to achieve 80% while others are expected to achieve 90%. However, Atlanta school is starting at a baseline of 45% and expected to grow to 90% while Winnfield Middle is starting at 59% and only expected to grow to 80%. The DIBELS/Literacy for Winnfield Kinder is listed in the data chart but lacks corresponding baseline and goals. In the decreasing achievement gaps section, again some schools are expected to make large gains while others make little and again the targets are contradictory. For example, in 3rd grade language arts, Atlanta is expected to go from 62% to 85% while Winnfield Primary is expected to grow from 62% to 95%. In the graduation rates section, all sub groups are expected to achieve a post grant rate of 88%. Again, this means that the special education sub group must improve from 10% to 88% while the white subgroup must only grow from 83% to 88%. In the college enrollment rates section, all schools are expected to reach the rate of 65% in the post grant year. Again, some schools are starting from 20% and others are at 53% in the baseline year. <p>In conclusion, the rationale for the goals set is undocumented and the resulting measures are confusing and contradictory in places. The goals are thus neither ambitious nor achievable. Therefore the district scores in the low range of the medium category on indicator A(4).</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	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the district documents that two of the seven schools have been acknowledged by the state as Top Gain schools, they do not detail how the schools achieved these gains nor what reforms were implemented to do so. Thus, a conclusion cannot be drawn to show that the district has achieved ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools.</p> <p>Charts are provided to show four years worth of student achievement data for each school. The data provided does not disaggregate student achievement into subgroups. It shows overall school performance scores. Of the seven, two had decreases in student performance over the four year period. The charts do not provide evidence to show that the district is closing the achievement gap as the data is not disaggregate to show subgroups. Furthermore, the district does not document four years worth of data for graduation rates nor for college enrollment rates. Additionally, the application describes how the district charted student achievement data but does not provide evidence of how data is made available to students, educators and parents.</p> <p>Therefore, the district lacks evidence to show a clear record in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in teaching and learning. The district scores in the low range on indicator B(1).</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the district is transparent in publishing it's salary schedules, actual personnel salaries are only available upon</p>		

request. There is no evidence to document that a high level of transparency exists to publish school level expenditures broken down by instructional staff, teachers and support staff. The district does not demonstrate a high level of transparency in district processes, practices and investments. Consequently, the district scores in the low range on indicator B(2).

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

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district states that the LA Board of Education supports districts in efforts to upgrade the public education system through such reforms as school choice, course choice, virtual ed, etc as long as the district operates within the confines of the administrative code. The district has not expressly made clear in the application what their proposed personal learning environment will entail. The administrative code is also not included in the application itself nor in it's appendices. The evidence provided by the district is somewhat vague but it seems feasible that the district will have the flexibility and autonomy necessary to carry out reform measures. The district rates in the high category on indicator B(3).

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

15

1

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides no documentation of engagement or support from major stakeholders.

- There is no evidence to suggest that students, families, teachers and principals in the district were engaged in the development of the application nor that they had the opportunity to provide feedback to the plan. The district states that 'stakeholders collaborated' but does not define who the stakeholders were. Additionally, no evidence is provided to demonstrate that 70% of the teachers from the district support the proposal.
- A letter from the Mayor is included to show support for the application however it is the only letter provided and feedback from all other stakeholder groups is undocumented.

Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator B(4).

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	3

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides limited descriptions of the elements of a high quality plan to address the components of learning. Evidence is provided to document teacher work surrounding curriculum development, professional development, integration of the evaluation system and Professional Learning Communities. However, the district provides and inadequate link between how these teacher behaviors will impact the student behaviors as described in this indicator.

a. There is no discussion regarding how students will be engaged and empowered in the learning process to understand their learning, to set their own goals or measure their own progress towards those goals, to pursue areas of academic interest, to have access to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives. The application does document other reforms they are implementing that address skills and traits such as critical thinking, communication, and problem solving which would be included in 21st century skills. Parents and how they will be involved in their child's learning is also not documented.

b. While the district does mention initiatives such as Project Based Learning, Distant Learning and Career Awareness, the link between these initiatives and personalized learning components is vague. The application details how feedback will be used with teachers but how that feedback will be used with students is undocumented. Response to Intervention is mentioned but again the application focuses on how teachers will utilize it as opposed to how students will be matched with what they need and be able to build on. The link between Response to Intervention and what accommodations and strategies will be used for high need students is missing from the narrative. There is also no discussion regarding a personalized sequence of instructional content for students nor of how high quality content and digital learning content will be included.

c. No evidence of training and support for students is included.

Overall, the elements of a high quality plan for learning are limited. While activities, rationales and deliverables are described, they are described from the teacher perspective as opposed to the student level perspective. Key goals are

obscure and the parties responsible are unclear. From the narrative, it is unclear how the proposal will implement instructional strategies for all participating students in a manner that allows students to pursue a rigorous course of study and accelerate learning through support of individual student needs. This places the score on indicator C(1) in the low range.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides details of a high quality plan to address teaching and leading by personalizing the learning environment.

The plan includes documentation of the district's goal: Empower teachers and leaders by creating collaborative environment. Activities are listed which include specialized professional development, coaching, Professional Learning Communities as well as others. The district feels that by engaging in these activities, teachers and leaders will be better equipped to meet the needs of their diverse learners. A limited timeline is provided. Evidence is provided to demonstrate how the district would begin these activities at the start of the school year and then, based on the feedback received throughout the program, the activities would be adjusted as needed. Deliverables including tangibles such as teacher CEUs are described as are intangibles such as feedback and data. However, the application does not specify what data will be collected. This could mean student data, data from the evaluation system, or other data. Similarly, responsible parties are alluded to and include a company to provide training and resources as well as the administration and teaching staff. The credibility for the district's plan is high as engaging in high quality and diverse professional development will lead to a wide range of teaching and instructional strategies that will then be implemented in the classroom.

The district fails to address the selection criteria related to increasing the number of students that receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. In the application, the district details that in the initial implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation systems, they believe that the scores given by the district are inflated as 97% of their teachers were rated as either effective or highly effective. Therefore, it would be nearly impossible to increase the rate of students who have access to effective or highly effective teachers as the district is examining ways to re-calibrate and lower that percentage to a more reasonable rate.

However, the description of data is ambiguous as is detail of how teachers will match students to instructional strategies that will be of the most benefit to them. The plan as outlined will achieve their stated goal of creating a collaborative environment but the connection to how that will result in a rigorous course of study for all participating students that will allow them to accelerate learning is limited. Therefore, the district scores in the low end of the high range on indicator C(2).

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:

The district provides evidence of a high quality plan to describe how school leadership teams are provided sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as schedules, calendars, personnel decisions and staffing, and budgets. A chart is provided that details the various groups in the school with the key personnel who will participate and the timelines for meetings. The activities and deliverables differ by team but the goals for each are to support the ongoing continuous improvement of the school.

In addressing the other indicators, the district provides inadequate information to address the indicator. In relation to organizing the LEA central office to support schools, the district describes how the board will educate itself in reform initiatives and ensure that policies are in line with research. This is incomparable to the indicator which asks districts to address how the central office will provide support to participating schools.

While the district does allow students to graduate in less than 4 years, they are required to earn 24 credits in order to do so and must still meet the attendance requirements of a minimum number of hours in class to earn that credit. Details are provided to demonstrate the various options for remediation and credit recovery as well as dual credit options but evidence is not provided to justify how students are able to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways.

Finally, the district provides a list of resources available to teachers but lacks a plan to document how these are adaptable

and meet the needs of high need learners.

While the district provides a high quality plan for providing autonomy to school level decision makers, it lacks evidence of a high quality plan in the remaining 4 sub-indicators. Thus, the district scores on the low end of the middle range on indicator D(1).

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

The district does not provide evidence of a high quality plan that sufficiently addresses infrastructure supports. The application asks districts to respond to how the district utilizes interoperable data systems. The district does not address this sub indicator. The application asks how the district utilizes open data formats to allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format. The district does not address this sub indicator.

The application asks districts to address how students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have access to the necessary tools and content regardless of income. The district states that by disseminating information in newsletters, parent conferences, report cards and electronic grade books that everyone has access to what is needed in a timely manner. However, this does not fulfill the criteria as stated in the indicator as the dissemination of information does not support personalized learning for all participating students.

In addressing adequate technical support, the district describes how educators have access to professional development and resources that are appropriate and parents can access the Title 1 Parent Resource center. Again, this does not fulfill the criteria as stated in the indicator. While the Parent Resource Center does provide information, resources and tutoring, it is only available for students based on socio-economic status. However, the district does not discuss how the Resource Center will support personalized learning for all students.

Overall, the district provides inadequate answers to the indicator and does not demonstrate the elements of a high quality plan to address the indicator. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator D(2).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes past reform measures put into place in 2006 and 2008 in order to illustrate the practices and structures that are currently in place. In detailing a high quality plan for implementing a continuous improvement process, the district provides descriptions of basic timelines including when the reform movement will begin as well as various groups and committees that will be responsible for meeting at regular intervals to review data and make adjustments as needed. Activities that will occur at these meetings are describes as sharing, planning, modeling, supporting and mentoring.

Key goals are listed as being included in the District Strategic Plan for Student Improvement. However, that document is not included as part of the application packet so those goals cannot be evaluated against the plan. The selection criteria asks districts to include how they will monitor, measure and publicly share information of the quality of investment. The district does not address this criteria in their plan.

The district does include elements of a high quality plan to for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback with opportunities for ongoing corrections. Other elements of a high quality plan are omitted, including key goals and deliverables. Additionally, the district fails to provide evidence of how it will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of investments. While the actions and timeline provided could result in continuous improvement, the district fails to demonstrate a clear and high quality approach to continuous improvement based on the absence of other elements of a high quality plan. Therefore, the district scores in the low end of the medium range on indicator E(1).

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

The district lacks many components of a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and

external stakeholders. The district does state that a team will meet to develop a plan. The meeting would be an activity in the plan and those responsible for the plan would be the team members.

Although not expressly stated as a goal of communication, the district does indicate that the work is aimed at improving the practice of leaders, teachers and school staff and develops and understanding of what high quality instruction looks like. Further, it is stated that the intent is that parents and community will be welcome volunteers to take part in the classroom as volunteers.

However, the district does not identify who their internal and external stakeholders are. A timeline is not proposed. Key goals of the communication are not expressly provided. A rationale for the communication is not given. Evidence of a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is undocumented. The district fails to document a solid plan for ongoing communication and engagement. Therefore, the district earns a score in the low range on indicator E(2).

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

For the required performance measures, the district provides the following proposal and goals for each grade band:

All:

- Highly effective/effective teachers/principals- Although elsewhere in the application the district states that 97% of their teachers were rated as effective or highly effective, the performance measures chart shows the baseline as 52%. The target set is to increase this percentage to 60%. The baseline data provided is contradictory to the narrative in the application.

K-3:

- Academic: The district selected the DIBELS assessment and aims to increase each subgroup by 5% annually. However, the goals set do not make an effort to close the achievement gap between subgroups.
- Non-cognitive: The district aims to work with a medical clinic to provide age appropriate healthcare and health/mental health education. No baseline is provided and the target is to increase each subgroup by 8% annually.

4-8:

- College and Career Readiness: The district provides baseline percentages disaggregated by subgroup and provides a goal for all subgroups to be at 75% in the post grant year with the exception of special ed whose goal is 45%. However, the district provides no narrative to describe how it is measuring this indicator. It only refers to progress monitoring. This level of detail is inadequate to determine if it qualifies as a performance measure for college and career readiness.
- Academic: The district proposes to use performance on the LEAP and iLEAP state assessments in both ELA and Math. Baseline and target scores are given for each subgroup. However, the district does not propose to close achievement gaps between subgroups based on the post grant goals provided.
- Non-cognitive: The district aims to work with a medical clinic to provide age appropriate healthcare and health/mental health education. No baseline is provided and the target is to increase each subgroup by 8% annually.

9-12:

- FAFSA: The district does not include this required performance measure in either it's narrative or it's chart.
- College and Career Readiness: The district provides baseline percentages disaggregated by subgroup and provides a goal for all subgroups in the post grant year. However, the district provides no narrative to describe how it is measuring this indicator. It only refers to progress monitoring. This level of detail is inadequate to determine if it qualifies as a performance measure for college and career readiness.
- Career Ready: Again, the district provides baseline percentages disaggregated by subgroup and provides a goal for all subgroups. However, the district provides no narrative to describe how it is measuring this indicator. It only refers to progress monitoring. This level of detail is inadequate to determine if it qualifies as a performance measure for career readiness.
- Academic: The district proposes to use end of course exams as it's academic indicator along with progress monitoring. However, these exams are not disaggregated by content or subject area. An overall baseline percentage is given as well as an overall post grant percentage. This is not sufficient to be used as a performance measure.
- Health/social-emotional: The district aims to work with a medical clinic to provide age appropriate healthcare and

health/mental health education. No baseline is provided and the target is to increase each subgroup by 8% annually.

For each of the performance measures proposed above, the district does not provide the corresponding narrative requirements as requested in the application. There is no discussion regarding the rationale for selecting each performance measure. There is no evidence to describe how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information and theory of action. There is also no information as to how the district will review and improve the measure over time.

Overall, the district provides conflicting data in regards to it's performance measure for all participating students. For the non-cognitive, health or social emotional leading indicator in each grade band, insufficient information and data is provided regarding the proposed measure thus this measure cannot be evaluated as ambitious yet achievable. The same is true for the on track measure for college and career readiness and career readiness with the 4-8 and 9-12 grade bands. The district omitted a required performance measure: FAFSA completion for 9-12 grade band. Finally, the academic measures for each grade band do not include goals that aim to close the achievement gap and the data provided for each measure is not sufficient to determine if it is ambitious yet achievable. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator E(3).

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district focus is on the information provided from the new tools it will use and how schools and teams will utilize that data. For example, evidence is provided to demonstrate a report format that will be given to each school at the end of a project. The report will include data and next steps which the school will then utilize to develop an action plan. The data provided will be based on how the school is implementing the following: Culture and Climate, Rigorous Standards-based Curriculum, School-wide Assessment Framework, Effective Instruction in Every Classroom, Organizational Structures, Strong Home, School, Community Engagement. This data is intended to improve teacher and principal practice; not to evaluate grant proposal goals.

However, the district does not address the indicator which asks for a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of grant funded activities including professional development and technology. There is no evidence to demonstrate how the district will evaluate the funds spent on the projects versus their effectiveness or return on investment. Therefore, the district does not receive points for indicator E(4).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In the district's budget proposal,

- a. The district plans to only utilize grant funds for their projects. No additional funding sources are identified.
- b. The budget allocates \$8.4 million dollars for the district to contract with national consultants to provide professional development and job embedded coaching for their staff over the 4 year period. Personnel costs/training stipends make up the next largest sum with a total of approximately \$450,000 and it will pay teachers to work outside their contracted hours/days to participate in professional development. A small portion of those funds is also available to pay 2 teachers to conduct after school tutoring 3 days per week for 3 hours per day. However, 2 teachers to provide tutoring for a district of 2500 students is insufficient. The remainder of the budget pays for printing, supplies and licensing fees. The large figure spent on contracting with a national consulting firm to provide professional development, while sufficient, is not reasonable and no clear link to providing a personalized learning environment for students is provided to justify the expense.
- c. i. Again, the district plans to only utilize grant funds to support this proposal. The district explains that by increasing the capacity of it's teachers and leaders, personalized teaching will result in producing students who are college and career ready. However, funds are aimed solely at increasing the capacity of staff and not at personalizing the learning environment. No rationale is provided to detail how personalization at the student level will occur.
- c.ii. The district explicitly states that there are no plans to continue the project past the grant period. The feeling is that by increasing the capacity of staff over the 4 year period, the staff can then continue any needed professional development or continuous improvement past that point. However, the district does point out that they hope to continue the action step of

after school tutoring after the grant period but no funding source has been identified.

In summary, the district proposes to spend \$8.4 million dollars of the \$9.9 requested to pay an outside consulting firm to provide professional development to it's staff. This amount constitutes the vast majority of the grant amount and the district does not provide a thoughtful rationale for the investment in order to connect the expenditures to personalization of the learning environment. Additionally, there are no other funding sources provided and the district has no plans to ensure the long term sustainability of the project in post grant years. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on indicator F(1).

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has no high quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. No estimated budget for 3 years after the term of the grant is provided as the district details that no additional funding will be needed because the grant will provide the district with the impetus needed to develop a continuous system of improvement and sustainability as staff changes practice. However, no plan is provided as evidence to demonstrate how the district will develop this continuous system of improvement and sustainability. There is one area that is identified as an area that the district hopes to continue in post grant years and that is the action of after school tutoring. The district further states that no funding source to continue the tutoring has been identified.

The district has demonstrated a lack of planning for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. No funding is identified. No description of evaluation of effectiveness of past investments and improvements in productivity are provided. No post grant budget is given. There is no mention of support from State and local government leaders. Therefore, the district earns no points on indicator F(2).

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

In it's application for consideration of a Competitive Preference Priority, the district proposes:

1. To partnership with the School Health Program to provide medical assistance to students and families as well as training and supports to school personnel. In the description of the partnership, there is no evidence to detail what kind of organization the School Health Program is nor where it receives it's funding. It is unclear if it is a public or private organization or if it is a department within the school district.
2. In the narrative, the district identifies 10 population desired results. Of those, 9 are academic indicators and 1 is non-academic. The non-academic indicator is related to safe learning environments. No indicator is provided that would relate to family and community supports.
3. The district provides measures to support how they will track the academic and non-academic indicators as stated in number 2. From these academic indicators, students who are determined to not be achieving indicators would be referred to Pupil Appraisal groups. However, the district does not provide evidence that the School Health Program is a member of this appraisal group and there is no discussion to suggest how the partnership will engage in the use of data to target resources. Similarly, there is no discussion regarding a strategy to scale the model beyond the district. In discussing improving results over time, the district details it's internal continuous improvement process but again there is no link provided to how the partnership will be involved in the process.
4. There is no evidence provided in the application to describe how the partnership with the School Health Program will integrate education and other services into the district. Many other examples of partnerships with outside agencies are provided but the application does not discuss the details of the partnership outlined in the Competitive Preference Priority.
5. In terms of building capacity of staff in participating school and providing them with tools and supports, the district describes the tools and supports that will be provided to the district in it's work with the national consulting agency as outlined in the Absolute Priority 1. Detail is provided to show the school level data in terms of the state report card on student achievement and how the internal district infrastructure functions in relation to decision making and engaging outside stakeholders. It does not, however, detail how the School Health Partnership will assist in building the capacity of staff.
6. In the charts provided to show ambitious yet achievable performance measures, the district combines some of the 10

measures listed in the narrative section. It provides charts with baseline and goal data for students to be taught by effective and highly effective teachers and principals but in it's other measures related to academic and non-academic indicators, it fails to provide any sort of measurable information. For example, the district proposes to measure improvement on End of Course exams but does not provide baseline data nor describe how much of an improvement. The only indicator that can be linked directly to the Competitive Priority Partnership shows a desired result of providing age appropriate healthcare and health/mental health education to see students obtain services to ensure healthy lifestyles. However, there is no detail in the narratives of the chart to detail how that data will be garnered.

Overall, the district describes a partnership with the School Health Program but fails to provide sufficient evidence to show how this partnership will augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools to address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of participating students. Therefore, the district scores in the low range on the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

In it's application, the district proposes to contract with a national company to provide high quality professional development and embedded job coaching/mentoring for teachers and principals. This professional development will assist teachers in transitioning to the Common Core State Standards and help build the capacity of staff to address student needs and analyze data. The district feels that by doing so, the end result will be increased student achievement and increased effectiveness of educators thus expanding student access to the most effective educators.

The district fails to provide evidence of how this professional development will accelerate student learning and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. In some areas of the application, the district provides data to show that they plan on reducing achievement gaps but in other areas, they provide goals which will not close the achievement gaps (see indicator B(1)). Additionally, the district does not provide a coherent rationale for how the professional development will result in students graduating prepared for college and careers and the measures provided to measure this preparedness are vague (see indicator B(1)).

Overall, the district fails to coherently and comprehensively address key areas of Absolute Priority 1. Contradictory information is provided in regards to closing the achievement gap and the link between the significant investment in the professional development of educators and the resulting student performance is not evidenced. To meet the Absolute Priority Indicator, the district would need to provide additional evidence to justify how the emphasis on educator professional development will be translated into personalized learning environments for students and how this personalization will increase equity and close the achievement gap. Thus, this indicator is not met.

Total	210	63
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0032LA-3 for Winn Parish School Board

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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant's plan does not address how its reform vision builds on the four educational assurance areas. • Plan describes transitioning to Common Core and PARCC by aligning curriculum and assessment using scheduled Professional Learning Community meetings to analyze assessments and students work to inform and personalize instruction is good but it does not describe how Common Core and PARCC will be implemented. Plan describes professional development for teachers and administration using six capacity building experiences is good because district will utilize professional development sessions and job-embedded activities to increase leadership skills and effective teacher practices. • Plan also describes counseling and parental engagement using programs to enable family stakeholders to make informed decisions about children's educational future is good. • Plan describes initiating the Response to Intervention process in all schools using universal screeners, a multi-level prevention system, progress monitoring and data-based decision-making progress is good. • Weakness is that plan does not address how students will be involved in the personalized learning environment. • The professional development element of applicant's response was strong, because it included building six capacity experiences targeted by district leaders; but was missing how students will be involved in this process to support the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing personalized learning. • Other than describing a typical day in a middle school classroom and the strategies that the teacher will use in the personalized learning environment, this section scores in the middle range because it does not detail how the approach will be implemented. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's approach to implementation is average quality. • Approach describes employing a national company to make professional development a positive and collaborative experience. Applicant details how the services will address urgent challenges facing K-12 educators and that school leaders and teachers will be deeply engaged in the process. • Applicant mentions that all schools in the district have existing needs, and that all schools will be selected to participate in the proposal. However, the applicant does not mention a description of the process used to select those schools. • The applicant makes available the total number of participating students, total number of participating students from low-income families and total number of participating who are high need students. • Overall applicant scores in average range. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant does not include this section of the plan. 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals for student outcomes are inconsistent and not ambitious or achievable. • Some data are missing. For example, baseline data is not provided for certain schools for 12-13 school year, but is provided for other schools. • Weakness is no baseline data is provided for performance on summative assessments for subgroups, so it is unclear how goals were established for years afterward. • Weakness is no rationale to explain a 3% increase in goals every year. Not sure how applicant's vision will decrease achievement gaps, increase graduation rates and increase college enrollment. • Graphs are provided, but there is no rationale to explain how applicant arrived at the baseline data and the growth data. • Applicant's score in this area is 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	3
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of data provided, applicant shows a strong track record of success in raising student achievement. For Atlanta High, school performance scores for year 08-09, begin 97.2 and end with 103.6. • District describes 97% of teachers scored in the effective or highly effective range versus the low school performance scores, based on student performance, which reflect a gap between the skills of the teachers and the achievement of students. This is negative. • Only 2 out of 7 schools were recognized as schools that improved their school performance score. • Applicant provides charts, but charts do not provide information on how to improve student learning and close achievement gaps. Charts do not demonstrate the applicant's ability to improve learning outcomes. • Another weakness is applicant does not describe any reforms being used in district that will address lowest achieving schools or low performing schools. • Applicant names informing parents using a Command Center, but does not address ways that inform and improve participation, instruction nor services. • Applicant scores in the low range. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant shows support to increase transparency in district processes, practices, and investments. • Applicant provided detailed evidence in the appendices to show actual personnel salaries at school level, actual personnel salaries at school level for teachers only and actual non-personnel expenditures at school level in appendices. • District publishes salaries for competitive purposes as well as for transparency to acquire the most capable teachers. District details average teacher salary is \$41,000.00. This district makes this information public on a consistent basis. • Applicant's score in this area is in the high range. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's plan supports state context for implementation using the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. • Plan describes how BESE supports Local Education Agencies in continuous efforts to upgrade its public education system by offering school choice, course choice and virtual education to personalize teaching and learning environments. • Plan mentions examples to support adequate conditions exist to implement proposal, but does not provide examples to support autonomy for implementation. • Overall score in middle range. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	1
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant only describes stakeholder engagement and does not provide evidence of direct engagement with teachers or students to support proposal. • Applicant supplies one letter from the mayor, but does not detail who the other stakeholders are who may have supported the plan. • Based on the lack of evidence in this criterion, the district ranks in the low range. 		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's plan does not include elements of being high quality. • Plan describes using Professional Learning Community to select and implement new strategies and innovative methods, but does not detail a process to do so. • Plan describes selecting teachers who will attend inservices, workshops, and conferences, but no mention as how teachers are selected to go to professional development. • District will provide a professional development calendar to address strategies to use in various content areas such differentiated instruction, response to intervention, DEEP in Math, Six + 1 Trait Writing programs. • Plan provides district with a graduation coach who works with at risk high school students. • Plan mentions vertical and horizontal teams and time during the school day for teachers to review student assessment data, but personalized learning recommendations based on college and career ready standards and graduation requirements are not mentioned. • Learning sources from the Rapides Foundation to provide financial and instructional support, STEM initiative, Project Based Learning, Distance Learning are mentioned, but plan does not provide detail to show how these programs will engage all learners to increase student learning. • Weakness is that there is no designated plan to engage learners, or how plan will access diverse cultures to deepen individual student learning. • Another weakness is no mention of a results driven accountability plan for students. • Another weakness is no mention of how parents and students will understand what their goals are and how progress will be measured toward those goals. • Plan seems to focus more on professional development for teachers and not on learning for students. • Based on the evidence presented in this criterion, the district ranks in the middle range. 		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's plan for improving teaching and leading describes hiring a company to work with teachers and leaders in the classroom as well as in workshops, group and individual meetings. This is a strong approach. • Plan describes using a company to model best practices in class, so that teachers can become more effective with teaching. This process will continue until the teacher becomes comfortable with trying the strategy independently. This is a strong approach. • Plan describes using data to measure growth, but does not name the data it will use, nor how the data will measure growth. • Plan describes strategies to use for each content area, but does not detail how strategies will impact student achievement. • Plan provides no rationale for increasing teacher preparedness nor how it will address attendance issues in district. • Plan names industry based certification in technical education, DARE programs, yearly professional growth plans, and mentor-mentee relationships. These programs are positive. • Plan does not mention data resources used nor how data resources will be used to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. • Applicant describes professional development as training, but does not detail policies, tools, data or other resources to enable participating school leaders and leadership teams to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerate student progress. • Plan will have school leaders write yearly professional goals, that will be used to help school leaders improve educator effectiveness. • Applicant does not mention of how to increase number of students who receive instruction from effective to highly effective teachers and principals to accelerate student learning toward college and career ready graduation requirements. • The professional development element of applicant's response was strong, because it included modeling best practices until teachers become comfortable, but was missing how data would be used to accelerate student learning, which is an important part of selection criterion. Therefore, the district scores in the middle range. 		
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D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides information on how practices, policies and rules will facilitate learning through a leadership team, common planning team, instructional data team and response to intervention team. This is a positive approach. • Applicant describes how school boards across the country are impacting student learning, but does not specifically state how this plan will impact student learning through practices. • Applicant describes school's leadership team, common planning team, instructional data team and response to intervention teams' purpose, membership and meeting frequency that will support personalized learning. The description demonstrates a positive plan to support project implementation. • District provides learning resources to all students, including language learners and those with disabilities, but does not describe how technology will improve learning. . In addition, individual schools partnering with community entities provide credit-recovery opportunities, job training, and industry-based certifications. Middle and high students are encouraged to pursue The Core 4 Diploma, dual credit and STEM classes to provide college level challenges. • The leadership team, common planning team and instructional focus team element of applicant's response was positive, but was missing giving students the opportunity to progress and no mention of how learning resources will improve learning, which is an important part of selection criterion. • Overall, district receives score in an average range. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant describes a high quality plan to support implementation through policies and infrastructure. • District ensures students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have access to content, tools, and other learning resources in and out of school to support implementation is strong. Plan uses a comprehensive data communication plan that shares state reports, district reports, school reports, and student reports. In addition, parents have access to the Parent Command Center to access on-going student-achievement data. • Applicant ensures students, parents, educators and stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support is strong. Applicant describes using the Title I Parent Center, which provides resources, information, and student tutoring for all students. In addition, individual schools partnering with community entities provide credit-recovery opportunities, job training, and industry-based certifications. Middle and high students are encouraged to pursue The Core 4 Diploma, dual credit and STEM classes to provide college level challenges. • Applicant describes using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format is strong. Students are encouraged to bring their personal mobile devices such as ipods, ipads, tablets, notebooks and laptops to school for instructional use in classroom, which is strong. • Applicant ensures that schools use interoperable data systems is high quality. Applicant describes process of what the degreed business manager is responsible for and how the school board begins the budget process early in the year by soliciting information from all departments. Budget is usually adopted in July after public hearings are held. Applicant also details the state accounting handbook and how the methodology is used by all districts. • District partners with several agencies to address needs of students such as Office of Juvenile Justice, Office of Mental Health, Office of Public Health. • Applicant's score in this area is in high range. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides an average plan for continuous improvement process. • District provides a narrative about how plan will begin with monthly administrators' meetings and faculty meetings to implement continuous improvement process. • Plan describes a process for a committee of principals and teachers to develop a district calendar to meet state mandated instructional minute and professional development days, but does not describe how committee will be 		

developed and how often it will meet to implement continuous improvement.

- Applicant addresses attendance issues through establishing and coordinating a plan and devised a method of communication for teachers, principals, Child Welfare Supervisor, Superintendent, parents and the local district attorney's office to support good attendance among students. This is a good plan, but does not provide a rationale for how these stakeholders will address continuous improvement.
- The applicant scores in the average range.

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

- Applicant provides a weak plan for ongoing communication and engagement. Elements of ongoing communication are missing. Also, elements of ongoing engagement are missing.
- Plan is weak because it only focuses on improving teachers and leaders and school staff and does not address how it will provide communication and engagement with stakeholders. Applicant mentions leadership team will develop a plan for communication, but does not detail what the parents and volunteers will be doing and how they will do it.
- Applicant's score in this area is low.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for performance measures is weak. Plan describes having grade level meetings to discuss progress toward benchmarks that will include four checkpoints during the year. Weakness is not sure how a grade level meeting will be used as a tool to determine effectiveness. Plan describes learning walks or instructional rounds to monitor change. This is a good approach, but does not detail what teachers will need to do in order to increase effectiveness. The plan describes looking for evidence of collaboration in planning across grades and increasing rigor in learning goals set for students. No mention of how to do this. The elements of how the measure will provide information tailored to the plan is missing. How the process will be reviewed and improved over time is missing.
- The lack of these elements makes plan weak because there is no process in place to review and improve over time.
- Applicant does not provide how it will review and improve measures over time to gauge implementation progress. Therefore, the performance measures are not ambitious or achievable.
- Based on the lack of detail presented in this criterion, districts ranks in the low range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments is weak.
- Applicant describes using CBM Math assessment, an online benchmark-screening tool. Unclear how this assessment will measure effectiveness of grant funds.
- District will use professional development plan with a built in needs assessment to respond to needs based on real data rather than assumptions, which will measure effectiveness of grant funds is positive.
- The professional development online library element of applicant's response was positive, but was missing activities to employ technology, which is an important part of the selection criterion.
- Score is in the low range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan for budget is weak.
- Applicant provides no additional funds after grant. Budget itself is not realistic because professional development alone will not change the district. No evidence of how allocated budget for professional development will be a reasonable use of funds because applicant has not made a strong case for how professional development will lead

- to successful implementation of reform proposal.
- The professional development element of applicant's response is average, because it enables educators to participate in job-embedded activities to increase leadership skills and effective teaching practices, but that element alone will not justify funding to support the project.
- Although there is a budget in graph form, the graph and narrative do not justify how the identification of funds will be used to support the project. Programs appear to be ones that already exist.
- Applicant's score in this area is low.

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

10

1

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant provides weak plan for the sustainability of project goals.
- The element of how to sustain the project's goals after the term grant is missing. Applicant details that it is expected that the continuation of the project will require no additional funding.
- Applicant mentions that continued improvements are planned to build capacity to continue the project. Weakness is no mention as how this will happen.
- Applicant mentions plan for reviewing alignment with state goals and district vision, purpose and goals. Weakness is no process to detail how this will be carried out.
- The professional development element of applicant's response is average, but was missing how funds will be used to sustain project goals.
- Applicant scores in the low range of this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant does not demonstrate a high quality plan to integrate public and private resources in partnership to augment schools resources for students.
- Plan names partnerships, but not how the partnerships will be sustained.
- Plan provides a list of 10 population desired results, but performance measures are not ambitious nor achievable.
- Applicant describes types of assessments to be given; however, no mention of progress monitoring or tracking.
- Plan's population level desired results only include three education results and one family and community support result.
- Weakness is that the applicant does not describe how data will target its resources nor how the use of data will improve results for students. Furthermore, a strategy has not been developed to scale the model beyond the participating students.
- Another weakness is district makes no reference to how it will integrate education and other services. District does not mention how it will build capacity of staff in participating schools.
- Assessing the needs of students are mentioned, but not much detail how staff will assess the needs and assets of the students to improve education. The needs of the school have not been identified; therefore, the needs are not aligned with the district.
- District makes no mention of a decision making process, but does maintain it will engage parents and families through J-PAMS program, but no clear description is mentioned as to how it will improve results over time.
- Plan does not mention how performance measures will affect students.
- Applicant's score in this criterion is average.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant's plan to meet absolute priority is weak and not comprehensive.
- Plan did not show how it will accelerate student achievement, increase effectiveness of educators, and increase rates at which students graduate from high school preparedness for college and careers.
- Plan provided no evidence of how extensive professional development alone will close achievement gaps.
- The professional development element to improve teaching was average, but overall the proposal was missing how creating personalized learning environments would improve learning for students and would accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, increase educator effectiveness and prepare students for college and careers.
- Overall priority is not met.

Total

210

76