



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0169NC-1 for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence that its work is built on the four core educational assurance areas: The applicant is fully aligned to the college and career readiness standards as defined in the notice. The applicant is a member of a state-adopted value added robust data initiative that includes data connected to student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The applicant is currently involved in collaborations with PTLA that is aimed at leadership preparation for leaders in the persistently lowest-achieving schools to ensure that staffing is comparable to where the most need is housed. The applicant has been succeeded with the TIF initiative to successfully lower teacher turnover in the lowest performing schools and successfully raise the student achievement within those same schools.</p> <p>For example: Project ENRICH (Educational Network of Renewal, Innovation, Collaboration and Help) has assisted 30 residency students in 19 schools and have helped place 18 of the participants in hard-to-staff positions.</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive scale up or phase in plan that is credible and logical for the implementation of the project, taking into account that there has to be a Phase in for "team selection and design" and then implementation on a phase in model with a select population to work out any kinks in the role out process.</p> <p>The applicant provides a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The plan is ambitious and provides research that justifies the approach.</p> <p>The applicant provides exhaustive outlines of what the classroom experience will look like from the students' perspective as well as the teachers' perspective.</p> <p>The applicant provides clear vision on what the student and teachers will experience in the classroom as well as what the student and parents can expect to experience outside the classroom. The applicant suggests that 25%-50% of the learning time in the classroom will be driven by blended learning. Learning will be matched to individual needs using real-time data to inform both the face-to-face and blended instruction to maximize learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated its understanding of the process used to select schools that were collectively eligible to meet the requirements of the RTTD grant. The applicant used data to support its decision to only include middle schools in the grant. The applicant also provided a rationale that supports the selection of middle schools for this initiative.</p> <p>The applicant has choose to include all of the district middle school which includes 14 traditional schools and 6 non-traditional schools. This project will served 12,451 students of which 8,203 are considered high need and 6,927 are of low-income.</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of schools that will participate in the grant activities as required as well as the number of participating students, students from low-income families, participating students who meet the criteria for high-need, and participating educators.</p> <p>The applicant provides a rigorous plan that is ambitious and achievable.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant outlines an ambitious high-quality plan that describes how the reform design will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform beyond the participating schools. The applicant has provided evidence of its ability to initiate change within a district through its implementation of initiatives that were a result of the RtT competition that required massive changes to teaching, leading, evaluations, and technology integration.

The applicant's project will revolve around the shift in educational paradigm in the following areas: technology, pedagogy, Multi-level systems of support, process changes, district support changes, and program evaluations. Project Inspire will transform learning, transform teaching, transform learning strategies and tools, transform school climate, and transform community.

The applicant provides a thorough scale-up or implementation plan that is indicative of a high-quality plan for reform and design that could be replicated and translated into meaningful reform throughout the district. The applicant does not directly address the extent to which the elementary schools & high schools in the district will be affected or how they will prepare students at the elementary for this new learning experience in the middle school.

The applicant provides a scale up or rollout model that facilitates the implementation of the project. The timelines, deliverables, goals are all reasonable. They are also all coelated to the appropriate person responsible. Overall, the applicant provides extensive information that would allow for implementation that is well thought out. The evidence of the high quality plan can be found in section D: Table 11.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ambitious and achievable performance objectives for summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, and graduation rates. The applicant provides an assurance statement that equity will be accomplished through the ability for every student to access the curriculum.

The targets for the overall assessment growths are reasonable. For example: 6th grade reading is at 71.4% with a target of 88.6 in 5 years. Based on value added models of setting target goals, these targets are reasonable. The achievement gap gains are also reasonable with closing the gap.

While providing graduation data, the applicant lends limited details on how project Inspire will affect the graduation rates over time. It is unclear or unspecified how project inspire will have direct correlation with high school graduation rates.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ample evidence to support a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement through the improvement of student learning outcomes and closing the achievement gaps including high school graduation rates. The applicant has implemented turn around or redesign plans in some of the lowest achieving schools that included replacing 50% of the overall staff.

The applicant provides ample evidence to support a clear record of success in the past four years in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest-achieving schools by providing supporting data from two elementary schools that implemented turn around models through SIG funding. The applicant also included examples from a middle school and alternative school. For example: Forest Park Elementary School had a composite performance score of 27% proficient in 2008 and now has a composite performance score of 56%. These gains are considered significant. The applicant provides raw data in the Appendix to support the claims made in this section.

The applicant demonstrates its record of success in implementing a robust data system that is available to students, educators and parents in order to improve participation, instruction, and services. This is seen in the ability for all data systems, EVAAS, NCWICE, and HomeBase to interact and allow for anytime, anywhere access for each stakeholder population.

The applicant has demonstrated strong supporting evidence that it has a clear record of success over the past four years inclusive of the above criteria

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant meets a high level of transparency as required in the extent to which it already makes available the personnel salaries for school level staff: instructional staff, teachers, and non-personnel expenditures. This information is available on the website, and the district also presents this information in a public forum once a year to ensure that all community members are included in the conversations.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a complete description of the efforts maintained by the state legislation that will ensure that the applicant has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. According to the applicant, the state has laws that gives local education agencies the statutory obligation and authority to customize learning for students. The district has recently undergone strategic planning. In 2011, the state received RTT funds that also align with the autonomy and regulatory requirements that are need to implement the personalized learning environments.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	14
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive description of how students, families, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. The design team consisted of central office and variety members, but only 20% of the middle school principals were involved in the design of the program. However, the design team shared information with all 20 principals on “several” occasions throughout the process. The evidence included supports the projects claim that all stakeholder input was solicited and used in the revision of the project before final submission.</p> <p>The applicant provides results from a parental survey that states that 83% of parents responded that they would like it if their student used a mobile device such as a tablet or a laptop for instructional purposes at both school and at home.</p> <p>The applicant meets the requirement for an LEA without a collective bargaining representation, at a minimum, evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal. The applicant provides documentation to support 79% approval of proposal from teacher in participating schools.</p> <p>The applicant provides a sample of support through documentation from such key stakeholders as parents, business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, and local civic based organizations including higher education.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides an ambitious and extensive plan for a project that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students in age appropriate ways.</p> <p>The applicant provides assurances that the “student, parents, and educators will be active participants in creating” the ILPs. This will be accomplished through student-led portfolio conferences as well as other teacher input and data reviews.</p> <p>The applicant successfully proves that the project will allow students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards or graduation requirements and in understanding how to structure their learning to achieve their goals through a partnership with University of North Carolina’s “Career Start” program. The application cites data to support the proven success of the program within other schools.</p> <p>The applicant will build upon programs and initiatives that are already in use within the district to ensure that students are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.</p> <p>The applicant will “provide access to high quality resources and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives” using multiple learning platforms. The 1:1 ratio of devices will allow students to have access and exposure to diverse</p>		

cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning at the touch of a button by providing access to high quality resources and exposure both at home and in the school building through the use of multiple learning platforms.

The applicant's plan provides for students an opportunity to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem solving.

The project will allow for students to control "what is taught, how it is taught, and where it is taught" throughout the project. The personalized learning sequence of instructional content and skill development is designed to enable the student to achieve his or her own learning goals.

The plan provides a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments as well as access to high-quality content, including digital learning content as appropriate.

The plan provides for weekly reflective feedback for a student's ILP. Accommodations will be made for students to access the devices and curriculum resources necessary to ensure that students are on track for college and career readiness and graduation.

The plan provides for mechanisms that will provide and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

The applicant provides an ambitious and comprehensive plan that may be unrealistic on the scale in which they are presenting. However, looking at their past successes and their strategic implementation plan in section D: Table 11, it shows the well thought out planning that constitutes a high quality plan that is reasonable and attainable in the context of this application.

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

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan that addresses an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting standards and graduation requirements. The application provides goals, activities to achieve the goals along with rationale for each goal. The applicant provides a timeline of how the approaches will be delivered. The proposal address how it will evaluate the approaches/activities and improve implementation of each one.

The applicant provides extensive details regarding its ability to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each need of the students.

The applicant has a process in place for adapting content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks.

The applicant has provide sound and strong support to prove that it has the ability to provide all participating educators with the access and how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student learning.

The applicant has provided details regarding the implementation teams within each building that will be utilized to support the school leaders and teachers in training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment.

The applicant has a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who recieve instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas through the use of their Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). This program has increased equity for all students by providing financial incentives for effective and highly effective teachers that teach in the most needest areas. The plan will build upon that by incorporating other projects such as ENRICH, a teacher preperation program that is through a partnership with University of North Carolina.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided an exhaustive plan that ensures that the project has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by demonstrating the organization of the central office has the means and ability to provide support and services to all schools participating in the project.

The plan includes the key aspects of organization among the central office. There are activities that are assigned to each

member along with a timeline for implementation of the plan and the activities included in the plan. The plan is credible and reasonable in meeting the objectives set out throughout.

The applicant provides convincing details that support its ability to provide school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as scheduling, staffing, and budgets. The school leadership teams are given sufficient autonomy through the School Improvement Process (SIP). The principals will be developing Personalized Learning Leadership Teams that will also have flexibility in scheduling and budgets to meet the criteria of the plan. This plan is very complex, so allowing the principals to maintain some flexibility and the ability of the district to maintain autonomy within the state confines is very important to the success of the plan.

The applicant provides details that are focused in giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic while allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways. Students will create Individualized Learning Plans that will be used as a key document in the assurance of meeting standards based on mastery vs. time in the seat.

The applicant has a plan for partnerships within the community to provide broad band access to families in need. Through the 1:1 device project it will provide learning resources that are accessible to all students including students with disabilities and English Learners.

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

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides convincing evidence that the project will ensure that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have the necessary content, tools, and learning resources both in school and out of school through 1:1 devices. Support will be provided through a service desk that will be on nights and weekends. Parents will have access through Parent Portal and teachers will have access through Learning Village. The Parent Portal will allow parents to communicate with teachers, see attendance, discipline data, student progress reports, and access various resources.

The applicant's project includes adding technical staff to offer "informational sessions" for students, parents, and educators on how to utilize all devices and content. It also provides after hour support ensuring that students, parents, and educators have appropriate levels of technical support. This includes noting that there are set objectives, a plan for implementing the objectives, and evaluating the objectives. The plan is overall credible and reasonable for meeting the needs of the district implementing the plan.

The applicant will utilize PowerSchool for its Student Information system, and the integrated instructional solution for its standards-aligned tool for instruction, assessment, and data analysis. As part of the HomeBase implementation, the teacher evaluation system will transition to Truenorthlogic for educator effectiveness and professional development.

The applicant provides specific examples of how it will ensure that the district uses interoperable data systems. It is unclear how it will offer budget data transparency.

The high quality plan that outlines the key goals, deliverables, activities, and responsible parties is found in Table 11 of this section. Overall this plan is a high quality plan. It meets the requirements of a high quality plan, but even more, every piece of this plan is aligned to a separate piece. There are no gaps or holes in the plan. It is very well thought out and laid out for clear understanding of who is responsible for the implementation of the plan. The application was docked 1 point because while they do an outstanding job of discussing the interoperable data system in regards to parents, teacher, and students reporting and use, it does not discuss how this system will allow for budgeting data to be a part of that robust system.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a complete and sound plan for implementing a rigorous and 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 through:

Objectives-oriented and Participant oriented evaluation models.

Feedback loops that will inform subsequent phases of the implementation.

Focus groups, surveys, and observations

An internal evaluator will be hired

Face-to-face feedback sessions and written reports will be developed in a manner “that makes them useful to key participants, and presented in a number of formats such as written and oral presentations.”

The applicant provides information to support the evaluation of the implementation of the plan to the fidelity in which it is implemented. They have included classroom evaluations as part of the evaluation process to ensure that fidelity is taking place.

The applicant has presented a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that includes key goals, activities to support those goals, timelines and responsibility for deliverables that are need to ensure the implementation of the plan. The plan is feasible and credible in its ability to ensure that regular feedback will be given to monitor the investments from RTTD funds.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear and comprehensive high-quality plan to ensure ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through the creation of Personalized Learning Leadership Teams from each of the buildings. These teams will be responsible for communicating and engaging parents, students, and community stakeholders in the project. These teams will meet and communicate with the Parent Advisory Council, Student Advisory Council, Teacher Advisory Council, and Community Education Collaborative to ensure that everyone is involved in the process. The plan includes timelines that will allow these teams to provide effective communication and engagement throughout the process. Overall there is evidence of a plan that is credible and feasible in meeting the expectations of RTTD funds.

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

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ambitious yet achievable performance measures overall and by subgroup with annual targets. The application presents feasible rationale and components on how it will measure and provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan. The application also provides how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.

The applicant is unable to address the number of participants in relation to highly effective teaching staff due to issues within the state’s reporting system. This may be a concern as that is a performance measure that was chosen to be evaluated as a result of the projects implementation. All other performance measures selected align with the projects initiative of creating personalized learning environments for 6-8 graders in the entire district. This includes the non-academic performance measures such as absenteeism. Absenteeism has a direct correlation with student success and the proposal provides rationale to support its decision on including each one.

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

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will execute a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD funding activities. The applicant provides evidence through logical models on its ability to meet the key objectives of the project presented. The applicant has provided timelines that address key goals and deliverables that will be scaled up throughout the project.

They have provided short-term and long-term outcomes for each deliverable and each deliverable has a person responsible tied to the implementation of an activity that will be implemented. The plan for evaluation is credible and feasible for the implementation of the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)



	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides reasonable budget narrative that identifies all funds that will support the project including those local, state, and other funds that have already offset some of the expenses within the project. The applicant provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities by providing details on trainings, conferences, specific numbers for attendees, as well as very specific equipment costs. The applicant has provided identification of funds that will be used as one-time investments versus ongoing operational costs.</p> <p>The applicant provides exhaustive details regarding the contribution of funds that support the implementation of the plan through recent initiatives.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a quality plan for sustainability that meets most of the requirements of a high-quality plan. The budget takes into account a timeline of activities, deliverables, and key goals of the implementation of the plan through the budget. However, it is unclear on how they will sustain the ongoing cost related to personnel after the life of the grant or how they will build capacity to no longer need those valuable positions such as Inspire coaches, added technical support, etc. If these positions are no longer needed, the budget should indicate that. If there will be other funds that will take the place of the RTTD for specific initiatives, the plan should be more specific on addressing those items. The applicant does have in place a plan that will evaluate improvements in outcomes that could also affect the funding sustainability for the good of the project.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive and coherent plan that will support the project that has been outlined in the application. It provides evidence of strong relationship between outside partners in which relationships have already been established and will continue.</p> <p>The applicant identified 8 population-level desired results for students within the districts project. The results were feasible and sound.</p> <p>The applicant provided specific details on how it will track the selected indicators through different initiatives such as PBIS and CHAMPS. The district will use the data to target resources and provides a strategy for scale up the model beyond the students being served with a partnership with United Way.</p> <p>The applicant provides innovative ways of the projects ability to partnership will allow for integration of education and other services for participating students.</p> <p>The applicant will insure the ability to build capacity in schools participating through the development of School Climate Teams.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has meet the absolute priority 1 by providing a coherent and comprehensive plan that will address and build upon the four core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve</p>		

learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned to college and career ready standards and graduation requirements.

The applicant has provided feasible goals to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the needs of each student and closing the achievement gap.

Total	210	201
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0169NC-2 for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) received high points for its district reform vision. As shown below, the WS/FCS proposal had outstanding responses to the various elements of this section except for one area. It did not receive maximum points because the proposal had insufficient discussion of rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals. In some cases, the proposal content has been included in this review because it showed the detail of thinking found in the WS/FCS proposal and to help explain the proposed reform program. The reform program proposed is highly integrated and is named Project *iNSPiRE4S* (Innovations Networked for Supporting Personalization in Responsive Environments for Students and Staff). The specific components are discussed in more detail in reviewer comments in later sections especially (A)(3). The Proposed program is research-based and comprehensive with integrated components dealing with all aspects of educational reform.

(a) WS/FCS noted that its reform vision was "to inspire an intrinsic desire for learning and teaching that constructs a psychology of success for ALL students, teachers and educational stakeholders."

They believed accomplishing that vision required attention to the following five areas that are the foundation components of *iNSPiRE4S* :

- **Transform Learning:** Create student-centric environments which inspire students to take ownership of their own learning experiences;
- **Transform Teaching:** Help teachers transition into facilitators of learning rather than purveyors of knowledge;
- **Transform Learning Strategies and Tools:** Ensure global preparedness for ALL students through the integration of customized, digital learning platforms and adherence to Common Core standards with a focus on literacy skills;
- **Transform School Climate:** Provide social and emotional supports to students, educators and parents; and
- **Transform the Community:** Engage key stakeholders in investing in lifelong learning for all students

WS/FCS already has a good start and has plans for additional work in the four core educational assurance areas

1) **Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy.** WS/FCS has already accomplished or is working on significant tasks associated with adopting standards and assessments. They include:

- Aligned standards and assessments with the Common Core standards (CC) and North Carolina Essential Standards (ES).
- Measured student performance utilizing North Carolina's accountability system called READY which aligns with the national Common Core standards.
- Used other college readiness performance measures include the EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT series of exams in 8th through 11th grades; SAT, and the number of students taking and performing well on AP exams. Career readiness performance measures include Career and Technical Assessments (VoCATS) and WORKKEYS.

(2) ***Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction.*** WS/FCS has undertaken significant work in this area. Some of the most significant are:

- WS/FCS utilizes SAS EVAAS as the state-adopted Value Added model for assessing student growth and providing data for instructional improvement.
- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is currently implementing HomeBase throughout the state as part of the state's RttT requirements for interoperable data systems.
- The district will utilize PowerSchool for its Student Information System, and the Integrated Instructional Solution (Schoolnet, OpenClass, Test Nav) for its standards-aligned tool for instruction, assessment and data analysis.
- NC Teacher Evaluation System will transition to Truenorthlogic for educator effectiveness and professional development. This component will provide teacher effectiveness data to assist district administrators and principals in making staffing decisions.

(3) ***Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most.*** WS/FCS has numerous professional development opportunities for teachers appropriate for their responsibilities. Those opportunities are described in other sections of the proposal. Leadership work was primarily conducted through the Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy (PTLA). PTLA is an initiative funded in part from North Carolina's RttT grant and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. NCDPI, is a year-long program that offers leadership preparation to talented individuals who will lead high need schools to educational excellence. The program has both summer coursework and school leadership internship conducted during the school year.

Teachers will be provided professional development tailored to meet individual student needs and preferences. Professional development will help teachers:

- become the facilitator of these personalized learning experiences.
- Set the standards, establish rubrics for mastery, and
- Facilitate multiple learning scenarios happening simultaneously in a redesigned classroom environment where learning is not confined to an individual content area, but where students and teachers integrate the understanding of concepts across all areas.
- Develop strong relationship between the teacher and student, one of trust, dialog and continuous reflection and refinement.
- Utilize digital learning instructional practices and tools. summer workshops and professional development outside of teaching hours to honor instructional time. Peer and Project *iNSPiRE4S* observations will be included as part of the professional development plan and PLCs will facilitate collaboration.
- Use multi-modalities for learning; and
- Use real-time formative assessments.
- Use "smart e-learning" platforms provide learning flexibility.
- Use Real-time assessments to personalize the instructional content and delivery

This section did not have sufficient discussion of rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals.

(4) ***Turning around lowest-achieving schools.*** WS/FCS has been awarded several federal grants, including a TIF grant amounting to over \$19 million in funding. This program has increased equity for all students through access to more effective teachers and provided financial incentives for high quality teachers to serve the neediest student populations. The program has had some notable successes.

- The teacher turnover rate in the TIF schools has been cut in half (23% per year to 11%).
- Thirty four of the teachers had student growth in excess of the state average in schools where this growth has traditionally been
- in negative numbers.
- Two of the eight incentive pay schools had student growth more than 1 standard deviation above the
- state average for all subjects/all students.
- Two of the schools persistently low-performing or low performing schools that were recipients of School Improvement Grants (SIG).

WS/FCS Articulated a clear and credible approach for 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. The WS/FCS Proposal indicated that it would use Project *iNSPiRE* to completely re-vision the middle school classroom experience. Some of the major components of Project *iNSPiRE* are:

- Literacy framework: Teachers and students will pay particular attention to integrating literacy competencies across the curriculum.
- Personalized learning: Student academic interest, learning style preferences and preferred mode of expression will be assessed as well as level of academic need. This information will then be integrated into the educational programming and instructional design.
- Learning and teaching: Instructional practice will move from teacher-directed to learner-driven and teacher-facilitated, matching the student's academic needs and learning preferences with the learning environment.

- Multidimensional learning platform: Student will engage in a blended, digitally-integrated learning environment where they will have preparation and modeling for accessing and using various personalized learning tools, both in- and out-of-school.
- Data systems: Students and teachers will have access to real-time, formative feedback to assess progress. This data will then be used by students and their teachers to inform their learning paths, which will include both face-to-face and virtual learning options. Student assessment data will be integrated, easily viewed and interpreted in an individual student dashboard -- a onestop site for all data and data analysis that provides teachers and administrators with the keys towards individualizing student learning.
- The proposal described very coherently what the classroom experience would be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments.

They indicated that:

- Students will have choices for cross-curricular content learning based upon the student’s identification of goals, academic interests and needs, and learning styles and preferences. Students will be assessed for mastery.
- All students will have access to blended learning opportunities in- and out-of-school, with virtual learning accounting for 25%-50% of learning time. Learning will be matched to individual needs using real-time data analysis to inform both face to-face and blended instruction to maximize learning.
- The classroom structure will look inherently different. At any point during learning time, students will be engaged in a variety of learning environments which could include: (a) frequently changing, flexible groupings, small collaborative groups, or large group instruction; (b) individual online/digital learning on district-provided devices or use of the district’s BYOD/MLC policy – using their own smartphone or tablet; and (c) mastery/competency-based coursework. The teacher serves as the learning facilitator while the student is constructing his/her learning platform to address individual learning needs.
- Students will be engaged in real-world, authentic learning projects utilizing critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills through small and large-group learning experiences that tap into their individual interests. The classroom will become a place of exploration and application whereby industry experts and higher educational partners will work directly with students to provide demonstrations, modeling and hands-on, applied learning opportunities. [See
- The student will have literacy supports built-in at each level of advancement. For example, students with reading skill gaps will also receive individual or small (homogeneous) group instruction in the development of literacy competencies.
- Competency-based/mastery progression based on student readiness for learning new or advanced concepts will reflect student growth towards individual goals and mastery of established standards (CC/ES). Rather than just seat time, students will work toward mastery of a content standard."

The proposal had equally rich description of how teachers roles would be different. It noted eight examples of teacher behaviors and activities that would be different in a reformed setting.

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

Maximum points were awarded for the applicant’s approach to implementing its reform proposal. The proposal provided description of the process that the applicant used to select schools and in a later section, WS/FCS proposal provided a month by month implementation plan for all the years of the proposal. WS/FCS proposal described a phase-implementation plan focused on all students in all middle schools. Teachers in the two core subject areas of English/Language Arts (E/LA) and social studies will implement Project *iNSPiRE4S* across all grade spans in all our middle schools. The next year, teachers in the math and science will implement Project *iNSPiRE4S*. The last phase will add middle school Encore teachers (all others teachers), so that by the last year of the project all middle school teachers across all grade spans in all 20 middle schools will have transformed their schools.

All twenty (20) middle schools were chosen for the project including 14 traditional schools and six non-traditional schools and the names and required information were provided for each school.

The proposal provided the total number of participating students and educators. Those numbers were approximately 12,450 students in grades 6 through 8 at all district middle schools. Fifty-five percent (55%) students in the district are identified as low-income (56% of total middle school student enrollment).The project will target 844 educators at these 20 schools.

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

High points were awarded to this section because of the richness of the description of the applicant’s logic model and theory of change for how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by the project *iNSPiRE4S*.

Maximum points were not given because this section of the proposal does not describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. The proposal will include all students in all the middle schools so scale-up will not be an issue for the targeted grades. The proposal does not discuss how Project *iNSPiRE4S*'s will impact elementary grades. It does mention that the impacted students will carry into high school many of the skills and strategies they learned in middle school as well as some behaviors and attitudes such as anti-bullying.

A summary of Project *iNSPiRE4S* objectives are summarized below to provide positive evidence of the applicant's logic model and theory of change and how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students. This proposal can not be understood unless readers understand the objectives of Project *iNSPiRE4S*.

Please note that Section D has the high-quality plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities that also fulfills the requirements for this section.

Project *iNSPiRE4S*'s Objectives:

Transform Learning. Through this student-centric environment, all students will have equal access to the curriculum (equity) regardless of their level of performance. The very nature of learning is that it is intrinsic. Middle school developmental needs assessment, formative and summative data, blended learning opportunities, small collaborative groups, project-based or authentic learning opportunities aligned with student academic interest, learning style preferences and literacy skill level will create a customized student experience. This educational experience will meet the students at their appropriate level, scaffolding learning and equip the student with college- and career-ready skills. This model is learner driven: Students will become the constructors of their own learning platform through academic (literacy) and learning inventory diagnostics, goal setting and the integration of digital learning. Student outcomes will focus on mastery/competency-based content standards instead of seat time in classes which will provide better indicators of future success.

All curricula will be aligned with CC/ES. Students and teachers, and *iNSPiRE4S* coaches, will have real-time formative assessments in order to assess students' strengths and needs in order to better align instructional plans. An integral component in this innovative learning environment will be engaging parents into collaborative conversations regarding how best to transform this environment to meet the needs of their students. For example, a student may watch an online lecture on soil formations for homework prior to constructing a hands-on demonstration for peers the following day in the classroom. Parental engagement and communication will be essential to the success of the individual student experience.

Transform Teaching. In order for the instructional experience to be tailored to meet individual student needs and preferences, teachers' roles must also transform. The teacher will become the facilitator of these personalized learning experiences. Teachers will set the standards, establish rubrics for mastery, and be the "coach on the side" as they guide students in the learning process. Teacher efficacy is crucial to fostering this reform. This is no easy task, however. It will take a highly trained professional to facilitate multiple learning scenarios happening simultaneously in a redesigned classroom environment where learning is not confined to an individual content area, but where students and teachers integrate the understanding of concepts across all areas. It will also require a strong relationship between the teacher and student, one of trust, dialog and continuous reflection and refinement. Teachers will be trained in understanding the specifics of literacy development as well as how to utilize digital learning instructional practices and tools. Extensive professional development for administrators and teachers will be required to retool the teaching and learning environment, with plans to tailor this professional learning to the needs and interests of teachers much the same way plans will be tailored for students. Teachers will be provided with professional development on personalized/blended learning, literacy across the curriculum and instructional technology. This will occur during summer workshops facilitated by national consultants, followed by extensive professional coaching during the school year. To accomplish this expediently, we plan to pay teachers stipends to attend summer workshops and professional development outside of teaching hours to honor instructional time. Peer and Project *iNSPiRE4S* observations will be included as part of the professional development plan and PLCs will facilitate collaboration.

Transform Learning Strategies and Tools: To implement Project *iNSPiRE4S*, WS/FCS will provide a laptop for every middle school student for both in- and out-of-school access. Students will be able to access digital content and resources anytime, everywhere supported by low cost broadband connectivity access for low-income families. [See section

(A)(1)(a). The following are some positives of the proposal. Middle school classrooms that are not currently equipped with Classroom Solution stations (which include a desktop computer, sound enhancement, document camera, interactive display device, classroom response system, iPad, and instructional cart) will be equipped. Twenty-seven percent of middle school classrooms are currently equipped. This will ensure that all middle school teachers and students can function in a collaborative personalized learning environment where digital learning will encompass at least 25%-50% of the instructional time.

Teachers, instructional coaches and support staff have access to CC/ES, curriculum resources such as lesson planning tools, pacing guides as well as a variety of digital resources that can be used to support instructional design and literacy development. Digital learning platforms such as Achieve3000 and Compass Learning will provide:

- Content alignment to standards, with an emphasis on literacy, across all core disciplines;
- Non-linear formatting for adaptive capabilities (which recognize the student's current level of understanding and adjust the content

accordingly);

- Multi-modalities for learning; and
- Real-time formative assessments.

These “smart e-learning” platforms provide flexibility. Real-time assessments will be an integral resource for students and teachers as they personalize the instructional content and delivery. Supports for using PL tools are included in the district’s RttT grant proposal. Built upon the success of the district’s current RttT initiative (SSC©-A), Project *iNSPiRE4S* will provide thirteen school-based *iNSPiRE4S* coaches at each middle school (one per school with small schools sharing a coach) to support implementation. *iNSPiRE4S* coaches will provide the following:

- Pedagogical support, including literacy skill development at the middle school level;
- Individual student data analysis to assess academic need;
- Ongoing and embedded professional development;
- Modeling of personalization strategies;
- Unpacking (aligning standards to content and student expectations) of CC/ES standards; and,
- Individual teacher support for creating personalized lessons.

Two SSC©-A PL facilitators (see Competitive Preference Priority) will provide district-level support to school-based *iNSPiRE4S* coaches. Four Digital Learning Support Staff persons will also assist in implementing the personalized learning environments with specific emphasis on the digital learning platforms. School Personalized Learning Leadership (PLL) Teams will exist at each middle school to guide personalized learning implementation plans so that each plan meets the needs of the individual school.

Transform School Climate: Project *iNSPiRE4S* will not only focus on transforming the classroom experiences for the student and teacher, but it will also hone in on developmental issues which are critical for social and emotional student development. Teachers will be trained in social and emotional competencies in order to gain a better understanding of human behavior and motivation. In addition to the focus on student developmental needs, Project *iNSPiRE4S* will assist with adult self-efficacy by providing teachers and parents with a greater appreciation and understanding of the specific needs of the middle school student. Training will be provided on the CHAMPS Classroom Management System created by Dr. Randy Sprick of Safe and Civil Schools. School staffs and other climate team members will be trained at each school in CHAMPS and other elements of the Safe and Civil Schools Environment and in turn, key staff will develop the needed skills to provide continued support and sustainability. A crucial component will be to develop enhanced student-teacher-parent relationships. See Competitive Priority section for a more detailed picture of how school climate will be transformed at each middle school. School climate supports will include two SSC©-Climate Coaches and the SSC© - Climate Program Manager.

Transform Community: Project *iNSPiRE4S* will actively involve community partnerships, industry experts, and higher education partners, such as Wake Forest University and Winston-Salem State University, in order to create real-world, authentic learning opportunities for students. The district has a strong collaborative relationship with the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, which facilitates these industry-to-education partnerships, as well as Forsyth Technical Community College and area universities.

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

High points were awarded for LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. The applicant’s vision was likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student. Specifically the vision projected increasing Asian scores by approximately 2% a year from a base of approximately 80%, an increase of 4% a year for Blacks from a base of approximately 60% in math and 50% in reading, an increase of 4.5% percent for Hispanics from an approximate base of 70% in math and 50% in reading. For LEP students, the proposal projected increases of 8% percent a year from an approximate base of 55% in math and 18% in reading.

Applicant projected 3.5% yearly decrease in achievement gaps for both Blacks and Hispanics. They also projected a yearly increase of approximately 2% in graduation rates for Blacks from a base of 80 percent and 2% yearly increase for Hispanics from a base of 70 percent. White graduation rates are projected to increase by 1% per year from a base of 87.4 percent while the Asian percentage is expected to stay around the present 92 percent. It should be noted that existing graduation rates for all the groups are already above national averages.

Projections were that college enrollment would increase 2% per year for Blacks from a base of 69%, 2% increase per year for Whites from a base of 78.6%, and a yearly increase of 4% for Hispanics from a base of 43 percent. Asian rates are projected to remain at the present 92 percent.

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

	Available	Score
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(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14
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(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

High points were awarded this section because WS/FCS showed improved student learning outcomes and because it closed achievement gaps by raising student achievement. It also had increasingly higher school graduation rates. It achieved ambitious and significant reforms in persistently low-achieving schools or low performing schools and made formative and summative student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services. Maximum points were not awarded because some information was missing.

It appeared that two key tables 3 and 4 were missing from the proposal so the reviewer instead used the text summary found in this section. The WS/FCS progress in reading and math proficiencies for elementary and middle grades and for Algebra I from 2008 to 2012 (the most recent data available at this time) on the North Carolina End-of-Grade/End-of-Course tests were generally positive for all major ethnic/racial groups, LEP students, students with disabilities (SWD), and economically disadvantaged (ED) students. The analysis of the results showed that improvement occurred over time generally for all subgroups, and gaps improved during this time period. Exceptions to gap improvement for groups that scored below the White student average included Multiracial in Elementary Reading, LEP and SWD reading in middle school grades, and SWD in Algebra I.

Given those findings, we could conclude that in most schools during the past four years, WS/FCS has shown improved student learning outcomes and closing of achievement gaps even as the number of Hispanic students and Limited English Proficiency students has increased. WS/FCS experienced drops in test scores five years ago and the improvements have largely brought back the test scores where they were six years ago.

WS/FCS has improved graduation rates each of the past four years. Overall 4-year rate increased from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012; the rate was 70.8% in 2007-08 and rose to 80.9% in 2011-2012. Rates improved from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012 for all the major ethnic/racial groups, LEP students, SWD, and ED students. Gains were greatest for Hispanic and ED students and lowest for LEP and White students.

There was no historical information about college enrollments as only 2011-2012 was available from the state. As noted in the previous section overall college-going rate was 72.2%, and was highest for Asian and White students and lowest for SWD and LEP subgroups.

b) Petree Elementary and Forest Park Elementary were identified as persistently lowest achieving in the state. Petree Elementary School (predominately African American) became a SIG (School Improvement Grant) school in 2010-2011. The turnaround model was chosen where the principal was replaced and less than 50% of the staff were rehired. The Petree performance composite over time increased from 31.4% in 2008 to 51.7% in 2012. The reform model included:

- Extended employment for staff;
- Increased learning time through an extended day (extended by 30 minutes) and extended school year (10 days for students);
- Performance incentive pay; and
- Job-embedded professional development.

Forest Park Elementary School's student population is predominantly African American and Hispanic; with the African American percentage decreasing as the Hispanic population has increased since 2004. The overall performance composite for Forest Park hit a low of 26.7% in 2008, and has steadily improved each year, rising to 57.5% in 2012.

c) WS/FCS provided a great amount of information to teachers, students, parents and administrators through use of HomeBase, an integrated, statewide instructional improvement system and student information system. The following are some of the resources available. Students have access to their assignments, grades and learning activities. WS/FCS has a formative assessment system in place for grades 3 through 8 and high school. Student analysis sheets provided information for items grouped by objective, identifying strengths and weaknesses for instructional focus. WS/FCS also used the EVAAS data reporting system, which provided student proficiency histories in all tested subjects and progress to date.

HomeBase introduced a new Parent Portal tool that allowed parents to view their child's attendance and progress, viewing Personalized Education Plans (PEPs), assignments, homework, and grades. Benchmark test results are provided to parents in the context of district results, with a focus on strategies for parents and teachers to support students. The EVAAS individual student reports are also useful for parents, in order to view histories and recent status. As soon as testing is completed each term, parents are sent detailed reports of student performance, with accompanying explanatory material. Teacher conferences and detailed report cards are provided on a quarterly basis and inform parents of academic progress. The district also used a real-time data tracking system (TRACS), which provides a weekly email to school staff informing them of students who have reached "triggers" that indicate risk of school failure, using data such as attendance, teacher grades, and disciplinary referrals.

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

Maximum points were awarded to the WS/FCS proposal because it demonstrated evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes,

practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. The following are examples of information provided and justify why maximum points were awarded:

- The superintendent has Advisory Councils for parents, teachers, classified employees, and students.
- The superintendent also met with about 300 community members in a series of 20 small groups during the summer of 2013.
- The district used automated communications systems to deliver phone and email messages to parents and employees in English and Spanish.
- The district used extensive websites, with easy access to our policies and processes.
- A television station was available to all cable subscribers.
- The district used social media, including Twitter.
- Department of Financial Services publicly presented an annual budget report that is inclusive of all personnel and non-personnel expenditures. This presentation was made before a public audience at a Board of Education meeting, which was televised and aired live and repeated.
- Past budget requests and annual budgets were posted on the district’s website.
- WS/FCS responded to all requests for public records, including information about expenditures and staff salaries.
- Local publications routinely reported on staff salaries.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Maximum points were awarded for successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant’s proposal.

Maximum points were awarded because the district appeared to have successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the "Personalized Learning" program they envision. According to the proposal, North Carolina law gave local education agencies the statutory obligation and authority to customize learning for students. Funding options also have the flexibility to meet specific district needs. WS/FCS allocated 77% of funds for instructional purposes during the 2012-2013 school year. The district recently developed a new strategic plan for continuous improvement. It was also part of a North Carolina RtT grant program of \$9.6 million received in 2011. North Carolina’s READY initiative was designed to support efforts of educators across the state through professional development, technology and standards and assessments around four pillars of work: (1) teachers and leaders, (2) standards and assessments, (3) school turnaround, and (4) data systems.

Maximum points were awarded because WS/FCS has undertaken several important activities associated with successful implementation of personalized learning. Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, CC standards were being fully implemented across the state. WS/FCS is aligning all curricula to the CC standards, which in combination with rigorous assessments provide indicators of future college- and career-readiness in science and social studies. Some of the positive special activities noted in the proposal included:

- Promote college readiness by providing smaller schools and more magnet schools.
- Encourage all students to take more rigorous classes including AP courses.
- Utilize PLCs in all schools for to enhance professional collaboration, to build teacher efficacy, to increase teacher capacity, and to evaluate teacher practice which impacts student achievement.
- Provide options for our students, especially in minority and low-income student sectors. One example was the Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy (WSPA) that opened in the Fall of 2004 through grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as well as the Thurgood Marshall College Fund.
- Work with four magnet schools on redesigning their programming in addition to personalizing the instructional environment so that all students, particularly minority and low income students, are prepared to be college- and career ready.

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

15

14

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The WS/FCS proposal earned high points for meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. There appeared to be considerable involvement by all stakeholders into an assessment of needs and strengths. The new superintendent to better understand her new district, conducted 20 forums with 300 attendees. The district surveyed students, teachers and community to obtain more information. The combined findings were used to structure the proposal.

The actual design of the proposal was made by central office and middle school principals. There appeared to be limited involvement by teachers, students and parents in the design of the proposal. They did have significant opportunity to show approval or disapproval of the program through use of surveys after information was provided in meetings and other information resources. The proposal indicated that 381 middle school students, 273

parents, and 310 teachers responded to the surveys.

Student support was generally favorable or unsure. Only 24% of students indicated that they definitely would like it if their instruction was split between face-to-face and on-line instruction, while 66% responded maybe and 9% definitely not. Asked if they would like it if grades were based more on student designed projects and less on teacher-assigned work, 46% responded definitely yes, 46% maybe, and 7% definitely not. Parent responses revealed 50% maybe, 33% definitely yes and 17% responded definitely not. As to grading being based more on student-designed projects, 60% of parents responded maybe, 22% said definitely yes, and 18% said definitely no. 70% of parents said they would be willing to attend a workshop in the summer to support their student’s increased use of technology, while 28% said maybe and 2% definitely not.

Principals explained Project *iNSPiRE4S* using the presentation that was jointly developed by the Design Team and the middle school principals. “Once the discussion was completed and questions answered, teachers were directed to a link taking them to the online vote on support for the grant application. The results of our teacher vote for or against Project *iNSPiRE4S* were that 758 of our 816 eligible middle school teachers voted (93%). Of those voting, 85% (643 teachers) voted to support the project. That represents 79% of middle school teachers overall.”

The proposal had letters from all the middle school principals and partners identified in the proposal. The proposal had one letter from the teacher’s organization, numerous higher education organizations and some from community members and social agencies. Letters from required contacts also were included including the State Department of Education and many mayors of nearby towns. All the letters were positive and supportive.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

WS/FCS earned high points because it had a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan did not earn maximum points because the sub-sections of (C)(1)(a) dealing with diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives was not as complete and of the excellence of the other parts of the plan especially (C)(1)(b). This section did not have mastering critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. However, all those concerns were addressed in other sections of the proposal and points were not deducted.

The plan included an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. WS/FCS proposed to address all those expectations of RTTD through implementation of Project *iNSPiRE4S* described earlier in some detail in section (A)(3). Noted below are specific efforts associated with improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

It is important to note that the complete implementation plan and all the required details can be found in section D and meet all the expectations for the high-quality plan required for this subsection That plan provided information about key goals, timelines, activities and milestones, and responsible parties. The following are reasons or examples of why this section was awarded high points.

(a)(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;

- Project *iNSPiRE4S* was designed to help students construct their own learning experiences through making curriculum choices (“what is taught”), determining content acquisition format/s including face-to-face and virtual learning options which offer flexibility in time and pace of study (“how it is taught”), and participating in learning that expands beyond the classroom walls in terms place of study (“where it is taught”).
- Education would be further individualized through the framework an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that will document the obtainment of academic skills and required curriculum.
- The ILP will create goals and chart the learning path. The ILP will also recognize the “whole child” range of social, emotional and physical needs of adolescents, which is one of the major tenants of Project *iNSPiRE4S*.
- Students, parents and educators will be active participants in creating these ILPs based on student information (academic needs, learning preferences, interests and abilities) and data analysis including current formative assessments, and evidences of progress toward mastery.

(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards

- Project *iNSPiRE4S* was designed to engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students in an age-appropriate manner. With the support of parents and educators, it helps all students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their

college and career goals.

- Project *iNSPiRE4S* 's utilized a blended learning platform, including 1:1 devices for all middle school students and Classroom Solution will assist students in charting their learning paths. Competency-based progression and focus on 21st Century learning competencies will ensure alignment with college- and career-ready standards approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education, WS/FCS and higher educational entities.
- Parents and teachers will be instrumental in facilitating rigorous learning in- and out-of-the-school environment utilizing the district-issued (or student-provided) devices.
- “The district will incorporate Career Start, a program aimed at assisting students in making connections between the academic curriculum and careers. Career Start was created through a partnership with Schools of Education and Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), the WS/FCS district, and the Piedmont Triad Council of Government.
- Career Start offers collections of lessons in core subjects taught using connections to real jobs assisting students with applying learning beyond the classroom.
- The goal will be for all middle school students to participate in Career Start with lessons aligned with CC/ES and college- and career-readiness standards. Topics of lessons will include: Career Research and Writing, Cause and Effect in the Workplace, and Fact and Opinion in the real world.”

(iii) Are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest;

- Middle school students, through Project *iNSPiRE4S*, will access a myriad of engaging learning resources, including digital platforms, focused on enhancing literacy skills across the curriculum where, typically, the greatest gaps exist.
- To provide real-life learning experience teachers and instructional coaches will seek community partners to engage in authentic learning opportunities which will deepen the student experience as well as allow for the expanse of learning beyond the confines of the classroom walls.

Examples of partnership are those with Forsyth Technical Community College and Caterpillar, Inc., science-related graduate students at Wake Forest University

(iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. The proposal was less clear on how it would provide access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. It did not provide sufficient information on how this would be accomplished. The proposal seemed to imply that because the student population currently represents 90 languages considerable exposure already existed. The following explanation was insufficient. “Project-based and authentic learning opportunities will provide for multi-modalities of learning and alignment with college- and career-readiness standards. students, as well as parents and educators, will be provided with social and emotional supports that will foster student and adult self-efficacy, teaching all-important social skills such as how to work in a team, communication skills, responsibility and self-regulation skills. Academic/instructional coaches will ensure alignment with Common Core standards (with focus on literacy competencies) as well as help facilitate authentic learning experiences for students and educators, such as internships for students and externships for teachers. Parent workshops offered during the summer months will also facilitate their exposure to different learning modalities and experiences better preparing them for the diverse learning environments that their students will enjoy”.

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

Writers of this section of the proposal seemed to have misunderstood the intent of this section. It provided a discussion of mastery learning instead. However in other section of the proposal, there were excellent responses on how project WS/FCS would address mastering critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

(C)(1)(b)

As noted in other sections of the proposal review, WS/FCS has provided exemplary responses to the issues in Learning (C)(1)(a) Because Project *iNSPiRE4S* is a comprehensive and integrated program it was difficult to consider those questions differently from the discussions for (A)(3) and (C)(1)(a). Reviewer responses in those areas are very closely linked with issues in this section and as such is a repletion of earlier responses. The proposal had specific and high-quality responses and examples and thus this section is given high points. The following specific responses noted in the proposal are summarized to show the exemplary design of Project *iNSPiRE4S* and to show that they meet the expectations of RTTD personalized learning.

(b) Learning – Strategies

(i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development

- Project *iNSPiRE4S* was designed to provide a flexible sequence of instructional content and skill development that is customized for the individual student.

- Students, with the 1:1 device deployment and digital learning platforms, will have anytime/everywhere access to core curriculum to achieve learning goals and graduate on time college- and career-ready.
- Project *iNSPiRE4S* coaches will provide intensive and ongoing professional development for teachers to prepare them for this multi-faceted learning environment where students may spend 25%-50% of their learning time in web-based, virtual learning environments. Schoolbased Personalized Learning Leadership Teams will also support the transformation of the classroom and school structures by involving students, parents, community members and educators in ongoing dialog related to best-practices and lessons learned to strengthen implementation during each Phase of the project.

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;

- *iNSPiRE4S* Coaches, supported by the district's SSC©-A PL Facilitators, will work directly with teachers to provide professional development and ongoing support for implementing high-quality instructional methods that accommodate the student's personal needs and interests, focus on literacy skill development, and that achieve college- and career-ready readiness standards.
- Successful coaching requires an equitable relationship between the coach and the classroom teacher.

(iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content

- Project *iNSPiRE4S* will provide digital literacy resources, as well as content specific resources, tailored to the needs of individual students.
- The 1:1 student laptops and Classroom Solution stations will also provide access to high quality content, both in- and out-of-the school environment.
- Online learning platforms, instructional software, and open educational resources will be provided for students and teachers in grades 6-8 in all middle schools.
- A daily plan might include teacher-student conferencing around goal creation or review, a preassessment of unit knowledge and skills, virtual learning tailored to content standards not yet mastered, face-to-face work on an integrated unit, collaboration with peers on a project, and an authentic learning task teamed with a local university expert or mentor.

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback,

- Real-time, formative assessment data will be provided to students, parents educators to determine progress toward mastery of student learning goals.
- The student's ILP will be updated weekly to reflect feedback.
- Based upon need, students may be placed into flexible groupings with content or literacy experts for interventions or enrichment activities. In this way, more students will have greater access to highly effective educators for targeted need and specialization of curriculum.

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students

- High-need students will be provided accommodations for the devices as well as access to curriculum resources. For example, students who struggle with literacy skills will work in flexible groups with highly effective educators engaged in increasingly intensive literacy instruction that targets specific skills.
- Professional development will be offered to teachers to learn best practices for delivering core, targeted, and intensive competency support. By providing a variety of texts, using flexible grouping, utilizing research-based literacy strategies, and leveraging technology, teachers will be able to build the literacy capacity for high need students.

(c) Learning – Training and Support

The WS/FCS Proposal received high points for this subsection because it recognized the best way to ensure students know how to use the tools and resources provided them to track and manage their learning is to be certain that their teachers are competent to assist them in accomplishing those tasks. The rationale behind this approach was that teachers would be able to show students how to use tools and other resources in an actual use applications. Students were able to see the rationale for the tools and resources because it helped them accomplish necessary work. Below are examples of strategies, WS/FCS planned to use to provide training and support:

- Students and parents will be asked for input on how best to implement personalized learning and what training and support they believe they will need.
- Summer workshops will be held each of the three summers of project implementation to assist with the transition to the personalized environment.
- Initial information to educators will be provided by the school-based Personalized Learning Leadership Teams so that follow-up support is always available.
- Project *iNSPiRE4S* observers will also assist teachers with formative feedback and recommendations for improvement as they work toward making their students use tools and resources provided them to track and manage their learning.

School leaders and teachers will engage in professional development during the summer prior to implementation focused on:

- Transforming the classroom into personalized learning environments,
- Integrating 1:1 devices, Classroom Solutions and digital learning platforms into the anytime/everywhere learning environment;
- Literacy development across the curriculum in middle school,
- Competency-based/mastery learning, and
- Supporting the social, emotional and physical needs of adolescent students.

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

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Teaching and Leading

WS/FCS earned maximum points because it had a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan included an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. The proposal had a wealth of very high quality responses to Teaching and Leading issues.

It is important to note that the complete implementation plan and all the required details can be found in section D and meet all the expectations for the high-quality plan required for this subsection That plan provided information about key goals, timelines, activities and milestones and responsible party.

Shown below are examples from the proposal that justify the high points given this section.

(a) All participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity

As noted in the previous section, WS/FCS has designed a program to provide professional development during the summer before the pre-implementation period for all middle school administrators and teachers for transforming the learning and teaching environments. The plan was designed to operate on three phases. Phase I would impact all English/Language Arts and social studies teachers. Phase II the following year would include all science and mathematics teachers. All remaining teachers (Encore) would participate the third year as Phase III. The Summer programs would have the following focus::

- Transforming the classroom into personalized learning environments,
- Integrating 1:1 devices, Classroom Solutions and digital learning platforms into the anytime/everywhere learning environment;
- Literacy development across the curriculum in middle school,
- Competency-based/mastery learning, and
- Supporting the social, emotional and physical needs of adolescent students.

WS/FCS’ teachers have engaged in extensive district-wide CC/ES training during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years focused on unpacking curriculum standards, designing rigorous instructional strategies, utilizing effective tools and resources, and creating formative and summative assessments. All professional development efforts were designed to help teachers implement strategies and tools to support students to graduate college- and career-ready. Teachers were taught to analyze the formative and diagnostic data so that they can refocus their instructional plans giving students additional support on specific skill development.

Ongoing, embedded training will focus on enhancing CC/ES alignment. Teachers will learn how to engage in collaborative development of students’ ILPs and utilize the information -- goals, academic interests, learning preferences, and progress toward mastery – to inform and customize instruction. *iNSPiRE4S* coaches, supported by SSC©-A PL Facilitators, will work directly with teachers to maximize learning for students and to track progress toward mastery of goals and college- and career-readiness standards. “Teachers will participate in PLCs to review student data, discuss curriculum plans specifically addressing digital learning and literacy across the curriculum integration, and to develop formative assessment models, including rubrics, which will then inform teacher instructional practice and plans. Just as students will assess their strengths and weaknesses to create their ILP goals, teachers will complete a self-assessment of their personal development needs as it relates to personalized learning implementation.”

(b) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements

Other sections of the proposal have provided considerable additional data on how participating educators would learn to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. They would learn to do this in a context and responding to their teaching responsibilities. The budget provides considerable information about providing access to those tools and resources. General assurances were provided in the following statements.

The WS/FCS proposal stated that “All students, regardless of their learning needs, will have access to the personalized learning environment and tools. The learning preference needs assessment, academic interest inventory, literacy/reading diagnostic, and previous assessment history will provide the students, teachers, parents and school leaders with information to identify the student’s learning goals and path toward mastery. As students proceed through content knowledge and skill acquisition, teacher (and students) will reflect upon effective strategies and useful resources that aid in a student’s progress toward mastery. Real-time formative assessment data and progress toward goals will inform the student’s ILP, which will be updated weekly. Due to the nature of digital learning and the constant upgrades to technology resources, we anticipate beginning Project *iNSPIRE4S* with a myriad of resources, but as implementation proceeds, resources will be added to the student and teacher repertoire.”

The proposal provided additional information about how ACT College Readiness, ACT ENGAGE (grade 7), ACT EXPLORE (grade 8), PowerSchool (HomeBase), Learning Preference Diagnostic, and Literacy/Reading Diagnostic would be used to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements

(c) All participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

Because Project *iNSPIRE4S* is such an integrated and comprehensive program much of the information responding to this subsection was addressed in earlier sections. Project *iNSPIRE4S* prepares teachers, administrators, and support staff to transform the current middle school classroom environment into an effective personalized learning environment. Teachers and students will pay particular attention to integrating literacy competencies across the curriculum. The proposal indicated that “Project *iNSPIRE4S* establishes innovative practices using tools, data, and resources to meet individual student academic needs. In addition, student progress is accelerated through the completion of common and individual tasks designed to promote college- and career-readiness. Professional development for Project *iNSPIRE4S* will occur in each of the phases of the project and will focus on implementing a successful personalized learning environment focused on literacy integration, including such topics as: utilizing different learning platforms, instructional coaching, assessing learning styles and preferences, best practices to support high need students, literacy skill development, differentiating instruction, and managing small-group instruction.”

In addition to professional development that is part of Project *iNSPIRE4S*, North Carolina GS 115C-105.27 requires that school improvement plans be created every two years. WS/FCS requires that school improvement teams (SIT) review their plans quarterly to monitor progress toward goals, identify steps for improvement, and adapt where needed to positively impact student achievement and school climate. Thus, school improvement is a continuous process. The proposal indicated that “North Carolina has implemented use of a value-added student-growth model that ties student academic achievement growth to educator evaluations. The NC Educator Evaluation System is designed to create and support more effective leadership and positively impact student learning. According to NCDPI, each set of standards on the evaluation instrument measures skills, knowledge, and behaviors that teachers possess and exhibit. The system is design specifically to improve instructional practice and enhance professional expertise of teachers and administrators.”

Using these tools and results, school leaders were able to identify specific areas for targeted professional learning in a timely and appropriate manner. Teacher effectiveness and assessment data will be used to inform staffing and hiring decisions in all schools and especially in hardest-to-staff middle schools. That assessment data can also be utilized to support student intervention and acceleration support. These strategies will allow more of our middle school students to have greater access to highly effective educators. The assessments, training, policies, tools, data, and resources were designed in the proposal to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements required in the RTTD program.

(d) WS/FCS appeared to increase access to effective and highly effective educators primarily through three strategies. All the strategies appeared effective and together increased the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals (as defined in this notice), including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).

The first strategy was providing financial incentives for highly effective teachers which serve neediest student populations. The proposal indicated that thirty four percent of the teachers had student growth in excess of the state average in schools where this growth has traditionally been in negative numbers. Early data for the second year showed similar growth.

The second strategy was through professional development. One effort was the Piedmont Trail Leadership Academy (PTLA). This program was supported by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and NCDPI, is a year-long program that provides leadership preparation on how to lead high-need schools to educational excellence. Project Enrich was another partnership professional development. In partnership with UNC-G, it focused on sustained improvement of teacher education in the district. This teacher preparation program connected teachers with students in high need schools and in high need positions, such as math, science, ESL and Exception Children (EC). One goal of Project *iNSPIRE4S* also will be to improve the preparation of teachers who teach in high need schools.

The third way WS/FCS appeared to expand the reach of the most effective teachers was by “redefining instructional roles so that the best educators can concentrate on providing high-quality instruction and targeted literacy support. The role of the classroom teacher will be redefined in a blended

learning environment so that teachers can serve as learning facilitators, coaches, mentors, and specialists for flexible grouping options. The influx of technology and personalized learning will attract teachers to hard-to-staff schools offering the opportunity for excellence and innovation in the eyes of the district and state.”

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D) LEA Policy and Infrastructure

WS/FCS earned high points because it has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. Information supporting the high score was identified for each subsection below. Two other sources of information are important to understand the policy and infrastructure response. They are Table 11 in section D that has the "Implementation Plan" and Appendix H "List of Essentials" which "provides guidance on structuring school management and supporting effective schools." WS/FCS does have a high quality plan and it is found in Table 11 that shows task, timeline, milestones and responsible party. The milestones have very explicit activities and specific responsible parties all tied to at least quarterly time frames. The following are specifics tied to each sub-area of RTTD expectations.

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools. This subsection was awarded maximum points because it has an amazingly detailed plan and description of the LEA practices, policies and rules operated at the central office and how they will operate for Project *iNSPiRE4S*. Building operations are described in the next section. The following are some examples of the content for this section.

How the WS/FCS central office is presently organized:

- Traditional administrative positions such as Superintendent, assistant superintendent, directors, etc.
- Specialist organized in cross-functional teams
- Zones that allow parents and students choices in programming options through use of traditional and magnet schools

How Project *iNSPiRE4S* will be organized

- Additional cross-functional teams to shore up instructional design, literacy skill development, technology, and social and emotional support systems for schools.
- Project *iNSPiRE4S* director will report to Dr. Kenneth Simington, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services.
- Supervised by a project director with support from these cross-functional teams which represent instructional services, student services, and the technology departments.
- School-based PLL Team along with the school improvement team (SIT) will be responsible for implementation of Project *iNSPiRE4S* and continuous improvement efforts.
- School climate teams will attend to the social and emotional needs of students, educators, and parents.
- Project *iNSPiRE4S* Management Team will work with senior staff to provide oversight for the project design and fidelity of implementation.
- Project *iNSPiRE4S* Management Team will include the Assistant Superintendent of Middle/High Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Executive Director of Technology, key Project *iNSPiRE4S* management staff, four school leadership team members, three SIT/School Climate team representatives, SSC©-A PL Facilitators, School Climate coaches as well as other individuals determined by need.
- The Project *iNSPiRE4S* director will oversee all grant activities including reporting, fiscal management, and progress toward meeting goals and objectives and other performance measures established for this project.
- The *iNSPiRE4S* Project Director will work with the district’s Department of Research and Evaluation and the dedicated evaluator assigned to this project.

- Additional people reporting to the Project Director will include the SSC©-C Program Manager, the Project *iNSPiRE4S* coaches, SSC©-A PL facilitators and the data/budget specialist.
- The Project *iNSPiRE4S* observers will report to the evaluator, who will report directly to the Director of Research and Evaluation. The evaluator will work closely with the *iNSPiRE4S* Project Director

The proposal had job descriptions for all Project *iNSPiRE4S* positions and gave detailed explanations of how they would function and what they would do. The proposal also described how buildings operated (described in the next section) and how the professional learning communities functioned. Very impressively, the proposal provided the research foundations for the organizational design and professional development.

It was important to note that “each school will receive support from district-level content program managers and PLC coaches providing ongoing professional development, modeling, and feedback based on performance data. Learning Team Facilitator (LTF) lead the PLC meetings. The Project *iNSPiRE4S* model will add 13 *iNSPiRE4S* coaches in each of the middle schools (smaller schools will share coaching support) to facilitate this bold transformation. We will assign two district level SSC©-A PL Facilitators specifically for middle school reform. These SSC©-A PL Facilitators will support the Project *iNSPiRE4S* school-based coaches and middle school administrators with intensive preimplementation professional development, and with ongoing and embedded professional development and district-level support throughout the duration of the grant. These facilitators will also assist in sustainability plans by working with high school PLL Teams creating a high school implementation plan, and providing professional development for high school science teachers during Phase II of the project. Our professional learning plan includes school leaders and administrators so that they can build knowledge and skills relative to the personalized learning environment, and provide regular classroom walkthroughs and assess successful key implementation strategies”.

The proposal indicated that the technology department will provide four Digital Learning Support Staff persons who will work with SSC©-A PL Facilitators, administrators, *iNSPiRE4S* coaches and teachers to provide technology support and resources for the blended classroom environment. The technology department will also provide a flex-time service desk technician. This person will work evening and weekend hours ensuring students, parents and educators can access the needed digital resources or technological support.

WS/FCS has determined that social and emotional structures and supports for middle school students, parents and educators was also an important component of Project *iNSPiRE4S*. They will provide a SSC©-C Program Manager and two SSC©-C Coaches to focus on climate issues in the middle school environment focusing on both student behavior and adult practices to create a safe and caring learning environment. “School climate plans will be integrated into the SIP for each school. The team will receive training on how to facilitate discussions around school climate and create student and staff supports for climate enhancement. The results of these efforts will be (1) Improved school climate practices; (2) Eliminating practices that are debilitating to both students and staff; (3) Norming school-wide behavior expectations for both students and staff; and (4) Norming classroom behavior expectations for both students and staff.”

b. Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy:

The responses for this sub-section were exemplary. The proposal noted that North Carolina requires that all public schools have a school leadership team which is made up of administrators, teachers, and parent representatives. Those teams meet regularly and provide overall leadership to each school on such issues as curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, school climate, and other issues related to school improvement. WS/FCS dictated that each school will create a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that will establish school schedules, create models for staffing, and define roles and responsibilities as well as look at other areas of responsibility for schools including budget management and fiscal accountability.

Each middle school principal has agreed to fully support the project, and will develop a Personalized Learning Leadership Team that will include teachers, the *Inspire4S* Coach, media coordinator, technology facilitator, guidance counselor, student assistance program coordinator, and others as determined by each school, for example parents, school counselor, and students. “The school teams are charged with ensuring that parent and teacher communications are clear, and that project implementation occurs with fidelity at each site. These teams will meet on a schedule that satisfies the individual school needs. A cross section of members of the school teams will meet together as the *iNSPiRE4S* Joint School Team, meeting monthly to ensure communication, coordination and cooperation among schools. Each school will be randomly assigned to provide a team member, so that it includes at a minimum two teachers from each core subject area, two electives teachers, a media coordinator, technology facilitator, a guidance counselor, two parents and three principals ...This team will meet weekly in the earliest stages of the project, then monthly for the remainder of the first year.”

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic;

As noted earlier in other sections, Project *iNSPiRE4S* was designed to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic The proposal indicated that” students will have access to adaptive content allowing them the flexibility to move forward in competency-based progressions with learning based on mastery of standards rather than seat time requirements. Teachers will collaborate with peers and students to create rubrics that assess understanding ensuring that the student knows what is expected to achieve mastery and that mastery of standards is demonstrated. The district will investigate moving toward a system of standards-based grading. In its simplest terms, Standards-Based Grading (SBG) is an assessment method that replaces grades with standards reports for each student.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and

The proposal response to this subsection was very adequate especially when considering content found in other sections where examples of demonstrating mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways were provided. The proposal indicated that “Individualized learning Plans (ILP) will provide students and teacher with a guiding document taking into account the student’s ability level, academic interests and needs, literacy skill development, established goals, content acquisition preferences, and alignment with Common Core Standards and college- and career-readiness benchmarks. Through the focus on literacy, students will be given the freedom to explore, apply and demonstrate mastery in ways that match their learning equation (ability, interest, need, and goals). Students, with collaboration from parents and teachers, will participate in student-led conferences to provide evidence of their learning and demonstrate mastery of content standards. Through the blended learning approach, students will have access to multiple methods for acquiring academic content knowledge and the demonstration of mastery including common assessments, rubrics, and authentic performance tasks.”

The proposal indicated that the district was exploring use of digital portfolios to provide evidences of student learning across all content areas and grade..They noted that because those products demonstrated work of a more integrated manner they provided data reflecting the students’ ability, interests, progress toward goals, and college- and career-readiness indicators.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

The WS/FCS proposal in an adequate manner indicated that all the RTTD requirements for this section would be met In other sections, the proposal provided specific details for how those expectations would be implemented. The key statements of compliance with intent of this section were the following: “*iNSPiRE4S* middle schools will implement 1:1 technology so that every student has a laptop (district-provided) or their own device (e.g.... tablet, smartphone) to access online resources, virtual content, personalized collaboration and learning tools, and complete assignments and assessments using digital learning platforms. For students without home internet access, our community partners will support families with low-cost broadband access. See Section (A)(1)(a). Personalized learning lends itself to adapting to individual student needs which will support access for our students with disabilities and ESL students.”

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2) WS/FCS earned maximum points because it has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

It is important to note that the complete implementation plan and all the required details can be found in section D Table 11 and meet all the expectations for the high-quality plan required for this subsection That plan provided information about key goals, timelines, activities and milestones, and responsible parties. Readers also need to consider Appendix H "List of Essentials" which "provides guidance on structuring school management and supporting effective schools" The infrastructure design and implementation plan are models for state of the art considerations. The plans demonstrated a lot of research on theory and practicality of providing infrastructure support. Much of this high end thinking can be attributed to earlier work by the district to document successes and problems. The tablet vs. laptop discussion is one example. The following are some of the high points summarized for each subsection. The tasks appear to be the appropriate ones, the timelines seemed to be realistic and the tasks appear to be assigned to the right people. The following are specifics for each subsection.

(a) Ensuring 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 the applicant’s proposal.

WS/FCS will deliver personalized learning through access to their own device or a district-provided 1:1 mobile computing laptop, appropriate internet connectivity for in- and out-of-school use, and Classroom Solution systems in all middle school classrooms. WS/FCS will use Odyssey for review and mastery of concepts in school as well as for learning beyond the school walls. With a 1:1 device, all middle school students will be able to access the Odyssey platform anytime and anyplace, and work at their own pace towards mastery of the content standards. Teachers and students will have access to real-time assessment data, and, thus able to better select learning path choices, including interventions and enrichment activities as needed. The data will also inform student and teacher personalized learning goals as recorded in the student’s ILP.

Parents will be active partners in this effort. They will:

- Participate in Summer information sessions and Parent Academies
- Provide input into implementation plans at each middle school
- Provide insight into digital resources utilized.
- Participate in creating student learning paths based on learning preferences, academic needs, interests and abilities.
- Participate in student-led conferences held at least twice a year, where students, parents and teachers will reflect on student progress toward learning goals, cross-curricular evidences of learning, formative and summative assessment data, self-assessments, and steps toward

improvement/acceleration.

(b) Ensuring that students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies

Maximum points were awarded for this subsection as the responses were very impressive for their comprehensiveness and the quality of planning.. The following are some examples of exemplary levels of technical support

- Each school will host informational sessions for students and parents where devices will be assigned and guidelines to technology policies will be provided, including training on: (1) the device and its functionality, (2) how to set up the device, (3) trouble-shooting common problems, (4) integrating the device beyond the walls of the classroom for the anytime, anyplace access, (5) integrating the digital learning options into the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP), (6) maintenance of the device, and (7) technical and repair support.
- Schools will provide an overview of how students and parents can access the digital learning platforms and assessment components (described in the next subsection) from home. This will allow students and parents to monitor progress toward learning goals.
- The technology department will also provide a flex-time service desk technician. This person will work evening and weekend hours ensuring students, parents and educators can access the needed digital resources or technological support.
- The technology department will provide additional support staff to field student and parent technical concerns and specific issues related to the functionality of the device. Teachers will also have technical support provided both for in school and out-of-school access.
- Technology department will provide four Digital Learning Support Staff persons who will work with SSC©-A PL Facilitators, administrators, *iNSPiRE4S* coaches and teachers to provide technology support and resources for the blended classroom environment.
- Currently, all middle schools have a one gigabit connection to the data center and out to the Internet. This provides plenty of bandwidth for video streaming and uploading/downloading of materials.
- All middle schools will be equipped with an expanded wireless technology infrastructure, including one wireless access point per classroom and in all common areas.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format 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;

This subsection also earned maximum points because the information technology management systems that WS/FCS has used or will use, meet RTTD requirements in an exemplary fashion. The proposal indicated that parents and students will be provided 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. Some of the information technology tools included:

- Learning Management System (LMS) that insure students will have access to their ILPs, information about pending assignments, teacher feedback, student profiles including their interest inventory and goals, and links to additional resources through the LMS.
- PowerSchool (HomeBase) that will provide student assessment history, student transcript, college and career planning tools. The Parent Portal will allow parents to communicate with teachers, see attendance and discipline data, student progress reports, and access various resources. Parents will also have access to content standards as well as information documenting what is expected in terms of their student's demonstration of mastery.
- Learning Village will allow teachers to have access to – curricula standards and pacing guides, instructional strategies, and classroom organization tools including sample lesson plans, unit plans and other resources.
- SchoolNet dashboard will have student learning profiles, student ILPs, attendance and discipline data, and assessment data.
- Blue Diamond (which the district is merging with HomeBase), will provide Teachers will access to common assessments, common benchmarks through PLC activities and other pertinent

(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems (as defined in this notice) (e.g..., systems

This section earned maximum high points because WS/FCS is using or will be using recognized tools that are state or national in origin. The fact that the North Carolina Department of public Instruction has already completed significant work on creating interoperable data system as part of it RTTT requirements means that WS/FCS can take advantage of all that work. The use of other programs noted in the following paragraph justifies the high score given this section.

“The NCDPI is currently implementing HomeBase throughout the state as part of the state's Race-to-the-Top (RtT) requirements for interoperable data systems. The district will utilize PowerSchool for its Student Information System, and the Integrated Instructional Solution (Schoolnet, OpenClass, Test Nav) for its standards-aligned tool for instruction, assessment and data analysis. As part of the HomeBase implementation, the NC Teacher Evaluation System will transition to Truenorthlogic for educator effectiveness and professional development. This will provide teacher effectiveness data to assist district administrators and principals in making staffing decisions. Data-driven decisions will also be part of the district's continuous improvement model as well as provide district administration with tools to effectively increase student access to highly effective educators through district-level staffing decisions. Administrators, coaches and teachers will utilize data sources to inform student progress and

implement timely supports to keep students on track for success in high school or to accelerate a student to a higher-performing level.”

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process

Multiple components of the WS/FCS proposal contributed to the high scores give to Section E. Specific responses to the subsection are noted below. The implementation plan is the document that includes key goals, activities to be and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities and it is found in table 11 in section D. The tasks appear to be the appropriate ones, the timelines seemed to be realistic and the tasks appear to be assigned to the right people. However, Readers also need to consider Appendix H "List of Essentials" which "provides guidance on structuring school management and supporting effective schools" Another important document was Chart 18 titled Logic Model.

The WS/FCS proposal earned maximum points for its continuous improvement process. It had a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous 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. The plan addressed how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff; Some of the components that helped justify the high score are:

- The *iNSPiRE4S* Project incorporated both Objectives-oriented (Tyler, 1942) and Participant-oriented (Stake, 1967) evaluation models in its approach, capitalizing on the strengths of each. The evaluation will have both a process component that examines implementation and provides feedback on key implementation components, and a outcome component and will examines the impact of the program on important teacher and student outcomes
- The evaluation process was designed to delivers timely and regular feedback on progress toward the *iNSPiRE4S* goals and objectives. Feedback loops were designed to inform subsequent phases of the implementation.
- The evaluation process used a variety of data-gathering approaches including focus groups, surveys and observations to gather data.
- Although and internal evaluator will be hired, the evaluator will report to the WS/FCS Director of Research and Evaluation, so that independence from the *iNSPiRE4s* project is maintained.
- The Evaluator will work with the Executive Team Project Director and others to identify thresholds for acceptable implementation of the *iNSPiRE4S* Project.
- The evaluator will communicate with stakeholders on key evaluation questions, and the methods and instruments as they are being designed, so that appropriate measurement tools are selected and utilized properly.
- Face-to-face feedback sessions and written reports will be developed in a manner that makes them useful to key participants, and presented in a number of formats such as written and oral presentations.

The initial evaluation questions are significant and important. They are:

- To what extent are the project activities taking place in each school?
- To what extent are project components being implemented with fidelity?
- To what extent are project outcomes being achieved?
- A quasi-experimental design will be used. First, we will have groups of teachers who have received training in PL and those who have not.
- The evaluation will compare outcomes for 9th graders for 2013-2014, before the implementation of Project *iNSPiRE4S*, with subsequent cohorts of 9th graders. 2013-14 would serve as the baseline year.
- The evaluation will follow cohorts of student followed in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and examine differences in variables such as attendance, student grades and disciplinary actions

Levels for initial implementation have high thresholds. Preliminary targets are:

- 100% of the infrastructure enhancements should be completed;
- 100% of the devices should be distributed to students and working properly;
- 100% of the internet connections which are provided should be working correctly;
- 90% or more of the training should be delivered;
- teachers will attend 80% of their sessions to be considered full participants.

The proposal did address how the data gathered through the feedback loops would be used for ongoing corrections and improvements during the term of the grant. That information was available in section (E)(2). The evaluation was expected to provide very sophisticated and detailed information because it used protocols and very large numbers of classroom observations by a large number of observers trained for high rater inter-reliability. In section (E)(2), the proposal explained how the management team would use the information to make adjustments. The proposal then explained how the proposed changes would be implemented.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement.

This section earned high points because of the quality, comprehensiveness, thought and preplanning evident in the plan. Multiple components of the WS/FCS proposal contributed to the high scores give to Section E. Specific responses to the subsection are noted below. The implementation plan is the document that includes key goals, activities to be and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. The tasks appear to be the appropriate ones, the timelines seemed to be realistic and the tasks appear to be assigned to the right people. However, Readers also need to consider Appendix H "List of Essentials" which "provides guidance on structuring school management and supporting effective schools" Another important document was Chart 18 titled Logic Model. Responses to the subsection are noted below.

The following are factors that made the plan especially endearing:

- WS/FCS has the experience and personnel capacity to manage the *iNSPiRE4S* project effectively and efficiently, and to ensure that the necessary communication and data feedback loops are in place and functioning.
- District level senior staff, including the superintendent, will ensure that the *iNSPiRE4S* Management Team has the authority, support, and flexibility to manage this undertaking. and to seed that obstacles are identified and resolved or mitigated.
- Each middle school principal has agreed to fully support the project, and will develop a Personalized Learning Leadership Team that will include teachers,
- the *Inspire4S* Coach, media coordinator, technology facilitator, guidance counselor, student assistance program coordinator, and others as determined by each school, for example parents, and students.
- The school teams will be charged with ensuring that parent and teacher communications are clear, and that project implementation occurs with fidelity.
- A cross section of members of the individual school teams will meet together as the *iNSPiRE4S* Joint School Team, meeting monthly to ensure communication, coordination and cooperation among schools, and between project staff and other central office staff and schools.
- Existing stakeholder groups, such as the Parent Advisory Council, Student Advisory Council, Teacher Advisory Council, and Community Education Collaborative will be updated on the progress of *iNSPiRE4S* regularly. .
- Multiple media outlets such as the district website, television station and Twitter will be used to inform the public about the project on an ongoing basis.
- Data feedback loops are built into the project, as evidenced in the five draft logic models. For example, group feedback reports will be generated and face-to-face feedback sessions will be held.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

WS/FCS earned high points for its performance measures. The high score was largely attributed to very ambitious yet achievable performance goals that were rigorous, timely and tied to the proposed plan and theory of action. The proposal indicated that effectiveness data was unavailable because "as part of our Race to the Top initiatives, North Carolina is in the process of adding a student growth component to our educator effectiveness measures. This, in combination with new tests and standards, has caused a delay in reporting. We will report the 2012-2013 baseline data as soon as possible, and set ambitious but achievable annual goals, overall and by subgroup."

The proposal provided all other information required in the RTTD RFP. The performance goals were exceptionally ambitious and yet given the

interventions provided by Project *iNSPiRE4S* appeared achievable. Chart 14 showed that WS/FCS expected that 97% or more students in grades 4-8 would be on college or career readiness tracks.

Chart 16 showed that across the targeted grades, student reading proficiency would increase dramatically. The following are some of the projections:

- Blacks - Base of 59% percent. Student proficiencies would increase nine percent the first year and four percent the following three years.
- Hispanics – Base of 52 percent. Student proficiencies would increase nine percent the first year and four percent the following three years.
- Asians – Base of 80 percent. Student proficiencies would increase four percent first year and two percent the following three years.
- White - Base of 87 percent. Student proficiencies would increase two percent first year and two percent the following three years.

Chart 16 B showed projections of even higher end of grade reading proficiency increases with 11% increases for Hispanics and 10% for Blacks the first year and five percent increase the next three years. Mathematics projections for both groups were five percent the first year and three percent increases for the next three years.

The “Proposed Performance Measures” were equally exemplary. They dealt with absences, in and out of school suspension, harassment and bullying, adult caring, being part of school, ACT Explorer Reading, ACT Explorer Mathematics, ACT Explorer Science, ACT Explorer English.

Chart 17 provided information on the proposed measure, the rationale for selection, ability to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information and the last category was plan to review and improve if necessary. The content for this chart was excellent and responded to all the expectations of RTTD.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section earned high points because the plan for evaluating the effective of investment was comprehensive. Maximum points were not given because the proposal writers did not sufficiently explain the design and structure of the plan and because the plan had insufficient quality quantifiers. After careful study, it became apparent that the evaluation plan was a grid designed to reflect the programs logic plan. It listed forty-eight project activities that then noted how the activities fit within the five objectives of Project *iNSPiRE4S*. The five objectives being Transforming Learning, Transforming Teaching, Transforming Strategies and Tools, Transforming School Climate and Transforming Community. The evaluation grid then provided information for each activity along a continuum of Process Outcomes/Documentation, Short Term Outcomes (less than 1 year), Intermediate Outcomes (1-3 years) and Long Term Outcomes (more than 3 years). The plan was able to provide very effectively what would be evaluated, what measures of instruments would be used, what the desired outcomes would be along a continuum of time but it did not provide effective indicators of what was the bench mark for poor, adequate or excellent results. Chart 17 provided additional information about timelines and indicators of tasks and people responsible. All seemed appropriate.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Multiple components of the WS/FCS proposal contributed to the high scores give to Section F. The implementation plan required that at least the following factors needed to be considered: (1) Status toward goals; (2) Evaluation data; (3) School Climate survey results; (4) Budget review and audit; (4) Report to stakeholders on progress toward goals; (5) Site visits.

The subsection earned maximum points because it identified all funds that will support the project and showed that funds were coming from sources other than RTTD.

(a) Four key sources of funding support were:

- Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools requested a total of \$24,885,332 of RTTD funds to support our four year Race to the Top-District project –iNSPiRE4S.
- WS/FCS utilized community foundation funding to provide additional support to the project. Community funding includes United Way, Communities In Schools, Youth Opportunities, The Children’s Home and The School Health Alliance.
- WS/FCS local funding will support several positions this project over each year of the grant.
- Local funding from 2012 enabled WS/FCS to offset the number of laptops to be leased for students.

(b)

The following seven facts provided the basis for a high score for subsections (b) and (c). They showed that the budget was reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant’s proposal and (c) provided a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities.

- iNSPiRE4S will serve approximately 844 educators in 20 of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County’s Schools. The educators will receive professional development and support that will help implement personalized learning strategies in the district.
- Proposed funding will serve approximately 12,451 students in grades 6-8; implementing strategies that will improve literacy, academic achievement and increase their college and career readiness.
- WS/FCS noted that \$468 in annual program costs, per participant for both teacher and student participants is in line with amounts specified by former successful district RttT grantees.
- WS/FCS separated the budget into four “project” areas: iNSPiRE4S Management, Technology, Personalized Learning, and Social & Emotional Support for Schools
- Budgets were detailed, comprehensive and linked to specific work tasks that had thoughtful rationale as why they were necessary
- Analysis of budgets revealed no problem areas where proposed expenditures were not linked to project objectives.
- Costs appeared reasonable and appropriate
- Budgets clearly Identified funds that were one-time investments versus those with ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period.

The proposals showed considerable positive thinking and planning for having a long-term success for continuing personalized learning environments and gave examples of how that would be implemented.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As noted earlier, multiple components of the WS/FCS proposal contributed to the high scores give to Section F. Specific responses to the subsection are noted below. The implementation plan is the document that includes key goals, activities to be and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. However, Readers also need to consider Appendix H "List of Essentials" which "provides guidance on structuring school management and supporting effective schools." The implementation plan required that at least the following factors needed to be considered: (1) Status toward goals; (2) Evaluation data; (3) School Climate survey results; (4) Budget review and audit; (4) Report to stakeholders on progress toward goals; (5) Site visits.

This section earned high points because the applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project’s goals after the term of the grant. The tasks appear to be the appropriate one, the timelines seemed to be realistic and the tasks appear to be assigned to the right people. The proposal did not earn maximum points because while the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments, it did not provide sufficient information to inform future investments. The following are examples of positives that suggest major components of Project *iNSPiRE4S* will continue after RTTD funding ends:

- The departments of Instruction and Technology will contribute staff and material resources to support the transformed classroom from local funds
- By the fourth year of the grant, facilitators and coaches positions will experience a reduction of 25-33% of these positions.
- Four existing instructional coaches will assume some of the duties of the *iNSPiRE4S* coaches.
- *iNSPiRE4S* continuation will be addressed in the next local bond referendum. The local community has voted on three occasions in the past 20 years to allocate dollars to support the school district in renovating existing schools and building new schools.
- The district has partnered with Wake Forest University to supply laptops to all teachers in the district.
- Technology support will be maintained using local funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The reviewer was very impressed with the “Competitive Preference Priority proposed by WC/FCS. It dealt with important issue that are impacting perceptions of schools nearly as much as the academic considerations. It has completed an amazing amount of preproposal work to establish effective partnerships. It has very impressive plans for tracking and reporting successes and failures and it had plans for scale-up that will allow success to be shared beyond the district schools. WS/FCS earned maximum points for its “Competitive Preference Priority” proposal to have *iNSPIRE4S* expand its program to include the climate piece of SSC©-C. Below are some elements found in the proposal that best illustrate the excellent response made for the various components. They illustrate why the Competitive Preference Priority” proposal rated maximum points.

SSC©-Climate was designed to improve the emotional atmosphere generated within a school. “Climate involves the perception of stakeholders concerning the fairness, openness, friendliness, ethos of caring, and sense of welcome of the school. It also refers to the degree of satisfaction experience within an organizational structure. The goals of SSC©-C include maintaining a sense of community in school that: reduces risk factors for both students and staff and promotes positive factors; recognizes and values the contributions of all: staff, students and parents; and promotes an atmosphere that encourages positive relationships among all key stakeholder groups.”

WS/FCS envisioned working with many partners on the Competitive Preference program. It is “enhancing and developing multiorganizational community compacts in partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs), and charitable foundations, such as the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Wells-Fargo Foundation, and the Winston-Salem Foundation as well as other providers that offer and/or support behavioral health services to children in schools in coordination with Intervention Support Teams (IST), school-based health centers, mentoring programs, and mental health services to students and families. CBOs include the Chamber of Commerce, United Way, the Community Education Collaborative (CEC), the Mental Health Association, Communities In Schools (CIS), Partnership for a Drug-Free NC, Youth Opportunities and CareNet Counseling with Wake Forest Baptist Health as well as internal groups such as the district’s Bullying Prevention Committee, the Wellness Task Force, the district’s PTA Advisory Council, and the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) are community/district groups that address social, emotional, behavioral concerns.”

(2) WS/FCS proposal Identified four population-level desired results for students, two for parents, one for educators and one for administrators that align with and support the applicant’s broader Race to the Top – District proposal. The student outcomes are concerned with building support, safety, disciplinary referrals and bullying. The parents outcomes are concerned with feeling schools are safe and comfortable with helping their children. The educator outcome is concerned with improved ability to connect with families. The administrator outcome is focused on improved perception as an effective

(3) WS/FCS has identified several student information software programs such as PowerSchool , TRACS Early Warning System “to capture and manage data for all students including current class schedules and teacher grades, disciplinary infractions, general school climate surveys for all students, parents, and teachers in grades 5, 8, and 12. This data provides insight into climate needs and perceptions of safety, substance abuse, bullying incidents, etc., as alluded to in *Section A*”.

(4) Each school team will be trained in how to use the data from) School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI).to facilitate discussions about improving school climate.

- They will use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a framework to improve behavior and academic achievement for all students. WS/FCS PBIS training is currently provided by the NC Department of Public Instruction.
- A Survey for WS/FCS indicated a sharp decline in the perception of teachers related to two survey items when comparing the responses from 2010 to 2012 a. students following rules at school (from 61.6 to 50.2/a difference of -11.4) and b. Administrators support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom (from 77.0 to 68.0/ a difference of -9.0
- *iNSPIRE4S* will assist in expanding and/or enhancing efforts so that all MS teachers will have use all types of data tools.

Targeting resources:

- Multiple data points analysis will help the district to coordinate existing resources and develop relationships with community partners to services provided to all students and families who exhibit the highest needs.
- Inefficient or ineffective practices will be modified or eliminated based on the data.

Scaling this model:

- United Way of Forsyth County (FC) made a \$2,961,692 investment in comprehensive programming at three high schools and three middle schools that includes tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery, graduation coaching and family engagement strategies over the last three years.
- United Way invested an additional \$8,479,000 in community-based programs focused on supporting our children and youth achieve success
- Americorps*VISTA initiative whose objective is to bring together WS/FCS, Forsyth Futures, and United Way to strengthen and align efforts to increase success for our most challenged middle and high school students
- SCC©-Climate partners such as United Way, the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, and the Winston-Salem Foundation become viable alternatives to assist the district in scaling up these efforts.
- The NC Department of Public Instruction becomes an avenue for disseminating our successes and offering ideas for replication for districts who want to improve school climate efforts.

(d) Improve Results Over Time A continuous improvement model for climate concerns will be constructed as an integral part of this proposal.

Integrating Education and Other Services:

- The SSC©-Climate program manager, the SSC©-C coaches and team members will work with targeted schools to identify and integrate services to more effectively meet the social and emotional needs of students and families.
- A team approach will better coordinate services and eliminate costly duplication so that families/staffs can be better served.
- The district SSC©-C team will help schools to build upon successful programs and practices and improve, adapt, or eliminate programs/practices which are not obtaining the desired results.

(5) Partnership to Build Capacity of Staff

- School Climate teams will function as a School Improvement Team with the focus on creating healthy, productive environments for students and staff to support growth and development.
- Staff will better understand human behavior and motivation finding alternatives to promote respect and demonstrate responsibility in working with students and other staff members.

(6) Ambitious, Achievable Performance Goals:

- Enhance current family and school programs and services which more effectively and efficiently meet social and emotional needs;
- Expand family engagement opportunities which build strong family/school alliances;
- Provide targeted services for high-risk students and families who face school failure because of alcohol, tobacco or other drug suspensions and/or other unmet needs or conditions that may lead to disengagement and dropping out of school; and
- Engage the business and community-based sectors to increase volunteers, mentors, internships, shadowing, and tutors for students enrolled in grades 6 - 8.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

WS/FCS has developed a very strong proposal. The district has completed a great deal of preproposal work, especially on standards, assessments, management systems and some professional development. They were exemplary in their familiarity with the relevant research and locations they might emulate. They had impressive stakeholder involvement of the proposal and have developed a powerful and engaging vision. The applicant's approach to implementation was exemplary. The district has an impressive history of successfully implementing reform efforts. It has in place an impressive technology infrastructure. The evaluation design is very sound. Very important, teachers and parents are very supportive of the intents of this proposal.

All the sections of the proposal were very strong. Some were exemplary and could be used as examples when providing training on proposal writing. Some aspects of the proposal went beyond expectations such as conducting the number of classroom observations they envisioned in their evaluation. This proposal is an easy call to designate as having met "Absolute Priority expectations.

Total	210	201
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0169NC-3 for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a robustly comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The vision builds on four assurance areas; a.) College-and Career-Ready Standards and Assessment, b.) Data Systems and Data Use, c.) Recruiting, Developing, Rewarding and Retaining Effective Teachers, and d.) Turning around the Lowest Achieving Schools. The approach that the narrative outlines is one that aims to build an educational environment for 5th - 8th grade students which will provide students with flexible/everywhere learning, re-vision learning paths, re-define teacher roles, provide project-based/synthetic learning opportunities, work toward competency-based/mastery learning, and literacy skill enhancements. The applicant proposes all standards and assessments with the Common core Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards. While providing data systems to measure student growth by utilizing SAS EVAAS as the state adopted Value Added model for assessing student growth in conjunction with PowerSchool and HomeBase as part of the interoperable data systems. The applicant proposes to turnaround the lowest achieving schools by integrating additional funds received via TIF grant and various other state and federal grants to improve teacher education. The vision articulates a clear path to improved professional practices by focusing on skills educators need to develop in order to provide necessary personalized learning experience which will ensure academic success.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal is to focus on the developmental needs of middle-school students. This approach was decided on after data analysis of the targeted group of students achievement/growth data in conjunction with school climate issues expressed by middle school student and parent surveys. Therefore all middle schools in the district will be targeted for implementing the proposal. The applicant has a detailed plan of implementation which outlines a 5 Phase (with intermediate scale up's) Plan which begins with PD and coaching for all stakeholders then transitions to ELA an Social Studies teachers (along with innovative early adopters in math and science), then builds to include all math and science teachers along with all middle school teachers. The implementation plan also outlines the necessary equipment at each phase. The plan calls for not only moving learning beyond the classroom walls, but transforming the structure of the school to accommodate a personalized learning climate school-wide. The total estimated number of participating students is 12,450.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a proposed plan for reform which lays out key goals and activities and is overall creditable, robust, and ambitious. It should be noted that many of the High Quality Plan components (timeline, deliverables, persons responsible) are listed on a chart found in Section D of the proposal. Unfortunately, the applicant's only limitedly describes a scale up to 9th grade. The proposal does not address how the measures will be scaled further into High School or Elementary schools which results in the whole plan possibly not translating into meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond participating schools.This critical aspect (scale up of reform measures) of RTT-D is an important idea which would ensure the proposed plan acts as a driving force for system wide improvement.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is supported by ambitious and achievable annual goals. The targets for increasing student proficiency and growth are 2-3 percentage points a year for the OVERALL population and individual subgroups will be expected to increase at higher rates over the course of the proposal (between 4-7 percentage points per year). The applicant provides charts and data for all identified subgroups with detailed explanation of the rationale for all subgroups with the noticeable lack of rationale for choosing graduation rate projections. Still, the target graduation rates and college enrollment rates, as well as, the goals for decreasing achievement gaps and increasing individual subgroup proficiency status are ambitious. The projected gains in these areas leave no question about the positive overall impact of the proposal on student achievement and increased equity.

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	14
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The narrative establishes a clear track record of success. In the recent past, the applicant has shown improvement across most subgroups and decreases in the achievement gap by most subgroups. The graduation rate has increased over the past 4 years from 70.8% to 80.9%. Achievement gaps have been closed in identified subgroup populations. The applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of reforming persistently low performing schools by illustrating the growth in two district elementary schools. One of which made use of the Turnaround Model (where the principal and 50% of the staff were changed) and the other used Transformation Model (where the principal was replaced in teacher effectiveness) for school improvement. The district has recently changed to HomeBase, a new student data system which will allow students/parents view attendance, progress, and Personalized Education Plan. This robust data system will provide real time data to all stakeholders in ways that will improve services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant includes a description of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investment. The applicant describes an automated communications system to deliver phone and email messages to parent and employees in English and Spanish, an extensive website which includes links to policies and processes, local publications; as well as a television station that delivers live and recorded budget reports inclusive of all personnel and non-personnel expenditures. Finally, there is a procedure in place that ensures public requests of records are handled timely.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicants' narrative demonstrates high quality evidence that the proposed reforms are in compliance with the current trend of reform in NC. The applicant explains that NC does not restrict school districts' ability to customize student learning, rather the state law gives LEA's the statutory obligation and authority to customize learning for students. The narrative explains the correlation between proposed reform and activities. Namely, how the applicant is working with Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation to examine and make determinations on the effectiveness of practice across several critical elements (curriculum, instruction, assessment & PD). Additionally, the narrative explains how NC's <i>READY</i> initiative is designed to support efforts of educators through PD, technology & standards, and assessments. These reforms will fold into the overall plan of district reform proposed in the application.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has strong evidence of stakeholder support as evidenced by numerous attached letters of support from political/community based organizations and post-secondary institutions. There is strong evidence for the engagement of stakeholders in the development/refinement of the proposal, in the meetings and surveys. The LEA reported that 93% of the middle school teachers responded to an online survey which resulted in 85% voting to support the proposed project. The only lack of evidence comes in the form of parental letters/evidence of support, while the results of a parental survey about technology needs of students, is reported in the narrative , there is no evidence of parental support or buy-in. This is</p>		

a crucial component in determining the overall success of the reform.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a robust narrative which meets most the listed rigorous attributes. The narrative is further strengthened when reviewing Section D of the proposal which identifies the responsible parties for monitoring implementation progress and providing a concrete time line. The narrative calls for the inclusion of technology integrated/competency-based learning opportunities, coupled with varied instructional strategies, and community/university opportunities for real world learning. These components tied with the adoption of Common Core Standards and student data programs allow students to assess their own progress weekly while incorporating different perspectives of-and-for learning across the content thus mastering critical core assurances in order to produce a solid foundation for student preparation. The narrative makes note that high needs students will receive accommodations as necessary to ensure achievement. An Individual Learning Plan will be developed for each student based on their educational needs and with stakeholder feedback to ensure all students' needs are met. The reduced points comes from the proposal not addressing how students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that might motivate and deepen individual student learning. Still, the rigorous plan set forth in the applicants narrative is well thought out and ensures positive educational impact for middle school students in the district. The overall rationale is sound making a wonderfully thought out plan actionable.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes a detailed narrative which interweaves the attributes in a comprehensive and coherent manner so as to describe a solid plan to improve teaching practices. The high quality feature is the rationale behind choosing the course of action. Again, the applicants' narrative is augmented by Section D of the proposal which contains the High Quality Plan for implementation. The progressive and creditable timeline, persons responsible, and rigorous deliverables are clearly outlined and provide a rigorous approach to personalizing learning at the middle school, ensuring high quality teachers and administration are placed to impact the neediest students, and retain/attract educators to hard to staff schools. The level of planning and thought enables one to realize the depth of conceptualization and understanding of authentic personalized learning by the applicant. The applicant, further, goes into great detail about the level of professional learning and support that teachers/administrators will receive in order to ensure student achievement. The proposal outlines how Professional Learning Communities will work, how INSPIRE Coaches will provide support and guidance to educators, and how data will be utilized to evaluate Improvement in teacher effectiveness and student growth. Additionally, the proposal details how educators will have access to support, tools, and data to ensure that the redefined blended learning environment will provide flexible grouping and improve student achievement.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a high quality plan for creating policies that will facilitate systematic change through organizing the LEA central office, providing support for all middle schools, and providing school Instructional Coordination Teams to reflect and refine School Improvement Plans in conjunction with School Leadership Team. The end result of this well thought out plan is that the participating schools will have well ordered school management, positive school climate, and other issues related to school improvement. Additionally, the WS/FCS district has formulated a "List of Essentials" which it is requiring for all participating schools to use which will provide guidance on structuring and support effective teaching. The applicant provides solid rationals for activities, a detailed implementation plan which includes a time line, deliverables, and responsible party. The proposal strongly supports giving students multiple and diverse opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards and to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. The applicant outlines how the implementation of 1:1 technology to access online resources, virtual content, and peer collaboration will support students with disabilities and ESL</p>		

students. Finally, the proposal provides school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, school climate, school schedules, and defining roles and responsibilities.

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

The applicant outlines a strong infrastructure support plan. When one considers the proposal as a whole, the implementation process is clearly visible and reasonable. The level of detail within the narrative evidences a thoughtful organization and ensures the overall credibility of the plan. Which, in turn will ensure that personalized learning environment will impact student achievement at the middle school level. The proposal includes a detailed narrative explaining how personalized learning will be supported to ensure access to necessary content tools, and other resources in and out of school. Specifically, the proposal calls for 1:1 mobile computing laptop, appropriate internet connectivity (for in and out of school access), and Classroom Solutions systems in all middle school classrooms. Finally, the 1:1 device aspect of the proposal will allow all middle school students the opportunity to access Odyssey platform anytime/anyplace. All stakeholders will have appropriate levels of technical support through the school based informational sessions (device and functionality, set up, trouble-shooting common problems, and integrating the device beyond classroom, maintenance, etc) and the district technology department will provide additional support staff to parents, students, and teachers. The proposal provides for the use of real time formative feedback systems to assist stakeholders with data for content acquisition and learning path, as well as, interoperable data systems (as evidenced by meeting the State Race-to-the-Top requirements).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a robust plan to continuously monitor progress. The plan is high quality in the model of providing timely and regular feedback on progress and in monitoring progress. Section E (1) of the proposal contains a strong narrative which describes the rationale for the proposal's improvement process and sets the initial evaluation questions while many of the High Quality aspects of the entire plan are outlines in Section D of the proposal which contains the timeline, responsible parties (very detailed and specific leaving little doubt who will be held responsible for individual aspects of the overall plan). However the narrative only vaguely addresses how the general public will be involved in providing feedback for ongoing continuous improvement of the proposal (there is mention of feedback loops to inform at each phase and the *possibility* of using surveys, not how the results used to improve the plan). The LEA plans to hire an internal evaluator so as to have an internal person dedicated solely to this project and who will report to the WS/FCS Director of Research and Evaluation. The overall plan is sound with the noticeable lack of planning to inform the public, this is a critical component to ensure transparency. Still, the plan is robust in that face to face meetings will take place regularly and written reports will be compiled of these meetings so that the investment of RTT-D funds can be monitored and corrected as needed.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a sound plan for ongoing communication and engagement of the *internal* stakeholders with twice monthly data briefs the first year then once monthly thereafter. The narrative in Section E (2) establishes the rationale for the applicants communication plan as one of support for students and parents while ensuring that individual schools and their staff communication clearly and regularly with the external stakeholders. The Implementation Plan (outlined in great detail in Section D) contains the proposed time line and Responsible party for conducting community outreach, however, the external stakeholders are relegated the sidelines as there is no evidence of engagement of these stakeholders beyond informing them of the progress. This is a critical component to external buy-in and support which will aid the LEA in sustaining the proposed reform. Still, the overall plan (with internal Management Team, feedback loops, and commitment to implementation with fidelity) is a sound approach to improvement. Additionally, the individual schools will be charged with ensuring that parent and teacher communication is clear and that teams meet on a regular basis, further evidencing the importance of local buy-in.

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

The applicant has a high quality plan with deep thought and specificity in the aligned Indicators for On-Course for College and Career-Ready program. The narrative outlines the rationale for selecting each measure; as well as how the measure will provide formative information tailored to the proposed plan of action and how each measure will be reviewed to gauge implementation progress. The performance goals are ambitious and achievable as evidenced by the projected growth measures. The applicant chose Percentage of out-of-school suspensions by subgroup as a grade appropriate social-emotional indicator of school success as well as several academic indicators to focus. The rationales provided are aligned and explain how each will promote personalized learning for middle students directly thereby improving student achievement.

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

The applicant provides an initial logic model which meets the requirements of a high quality plan in that there are key goals with corresponding activities and short/long (indicating a generalized timeline) term deliverables that will be used within a creditable system of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the proposed plan. One must assume (as this section does not clearly identify responsible parties) from the overall narrative that the internal evaluator will generally oversee the evaluation process and work with key members of the LEA to determine effectiveness of investments based on the short term and long term expected outcomes. The plan (as presented in the entire proposal) is robust and creditable.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed budget and tables are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed program of reform. In addition to the grant funds, the LEA proposes to make use of Race to the Top State grant, Federal Funds, and community funding sources (including United Way, Communities in Schools, and Youth Organizations) to fully impact student achievement. The applicant, further, broke down the budgets in to four projects and presented a detailed yearly budget with Cost Descriptions and Assumptions included. Finally, the applicant identified funds that will be used for one-time investments as well as funds that will be utilized for ongoing operational costs during and after the grant. While the proposal narrative implied the ability to leverage community and local funding with a focus on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments, the applicant does not directly address this aspect of the criteria, resulting in a reduction points for this section.

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

The applicant has a broad plan for leveraging private as well as state and local funds to sustain the proposed reform. The plan is centered around local bond issues (for which the applicant cites the public's past record of funding, though the current proposal does not robustly engage the public in improvement measures which could call into question the public's future support support for additional bonds) ,continued state support to maintain cutting edge technology, and folding middle school instructional coaches into the INSPIRE coaches positions. Finally, the applicant foresees the possibilities of reducing the amount of funding necessary for training and coaching which could deduce the effectiveness of the reform. While the applicant does have a plan for sustaining the project goals after the term of the grant, it is not High Quality as it depends heavily on passing a local bond and folding critical individual jobs into other jobs (which could reduce the support necessary to sustain the reform).

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has a strong Competitive Preference Priority by utilizing a detailed narrative with applicable tables. The applicant provides a full description of the partnerships with the public through the many partnerships detailed in the narrative. Additionally, the applicant identifies the population level desired along with results in detailed bulleted narrative. The applicant addresses the use of data with a detailed descriptions of how to track indicators and using Data to target resources. The applicant proposes scaling the model into a three- fold scale. The proposal will track progress through the use of a variety of student information software programs (PowerSchool, TRACS, and school climate surveys). The applicant will make academic success and measures of a variety of social and emotional factors a priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurances to create a middle school learning environment that is designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of the learning experience for individual students. This is a highly structured and detailed plan with the necessary components to ensure students will achieve long term academic success.

Total	210	198
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