



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0131TX-3 for Education Services Center Region 12

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A consortium of schools developed a comprehensive plan to reach all the students in their many schools through staff development as a focus to improve academics, increase school readiness, and develop systems to increase college and career readiness. Employing coaches and business partners in their effort is a strong point. Involving students in developing curriculum is innovative. Partnerships are described that will support the endeavors of the program. The partnerships include the Baylor Research and Innovative Collaborative as a primary partner for support of STEM activities. The University of Texas is noted as a support for teacher education and engineering, aquatic, and astrophysics groups are noted as strong supports for laboratory access, materials, and access to scientists for students. These will be significant partners in expanding students' current access to science education and high quality teachers. In order to support the turn around of their lowest performing schools, the consortium provides evidence that increasing the school day, reducing class sizes, and analyzing data for sub groups are some of the successful strategies used in the past that will be expanded upon by grant services through personalized instruction.</p> <p>Although personalization of instruction is described, it is difficult to visualize how the systems described will support both common and individualized learning atmospheres for children. The approach lists a variety of support through collaboration with local resources and educational agencies but the day- to- day implementation of the project is unclear. The classroom experience is not well described with individual examples of how the strategies will be introduced to support students working together on collaborative projects.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium provides evidence that the project design involved an analysis of summative student data, college readiness data, surveys of teachers, administrators and community members to determine that all three districts are in need of reform. Data is provided to document that all students in all three districts' schools will be served including preschool students.</p> <p>Data is presented to develop a coherent system to address the needs of students pre-K through 12th grade and beyond to improve skills of teachers to address the needs of their high risk population by focusing on improving the instructional core for early literacy and language arts, developing after school learning centers to provide academic support which will include personalized tutoring systems, create an online portal to increase the flow of data for meaningful use, develop the use of STEM activities and to increase the ability of counselors and advisors to promote college and career readiness. These are all appropriate strategies for addressing the needs of students most at risk. Sufficient data is provided as a rationale for why these three schools were selected to participate.</p> <p>The proposal includes ambitious plans for accelerating student learning by providing access to partnerships, training teachers and principals and provides online systems for student personalization of courses. An online technology system will provide students with viable options for creating and developing their learning experiences and access data to monitor the consortium's efforts to turn around their schools who are most at risk at the current time. This will be accomplished through use of an aligned curriculum to new Texas standards.</p> <p>Data is lacking on the needs of the participating teachers. It is not clear what teaching standards are in need of support. It is also unclear if all students in the three schools will receive the services of the system described.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Local needs and gaps among sub groups were used to form the consortia, which will work together to design and implement rigorous standards and high quality assessments. There are thirteen schools to be served by the project. An easy to use tool for accessing data to</p> | | |

inform instruction and decisions, including training and support to provide the teachers, parents, and community will be created. Innovative strategies and effective approaches in turn around school research will be applied. Sustaining the reform will include collaboration with local businesses, educational centers, and other stakeholders will include math and science education through partnerships.

Three main elements create a focused approach to implementation. These include a series of projects directed to provide the portal to technology, a robust PreK-3rd approach, and an out of school program that will provide tutorial services in the core academic subjects. A total of eight projects are described to include principal leadership and teacher effectiveness directed toward turn around strategies. Breaking the activities of the proposal into specific projects directed toward creating a safety net for students is a very sound strategy for successful implementation of project services. Personalization of learning will also include access to technology for students.

It not clear how the services of the program can be scaled up and expanded to support change across the districts following the project funding period. Scaling up services across a three district consortium will require a comprehensive plan to continue the collaboration and mutual support for the students.

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

A substantial amount of data from each of the three districts is provided to support identified performance measures. The proposal includes comprehensive information from each of the schools in each of the three districts of the consortium. The data includes grade level, sub group, subject area, and data from end of year exams from high school courses. Fluid grouping strategies are noted as a sound support for individualizing instruction.

Tracking student data appears to be the main strategy of the consortium for increasing graduation rates.

The increase expectation percentages vary from measure to measure and goal to goal. It is unclear why from year to year expectations vary from 1% growth to 2% growth for various subgroups. The expectations are inconsistent and not explained. It also does not demonstrate an intention to accelerate learning for any particular subgroup. Several of the schools in the consortium include preschool students. The proposal intends to address all students however, the preschool students needs are identified as 85% developmentally delayed in two of the three districts yet there appears to be no data to support this evidence nor targets or goals to improve the level of skills of preschoolers.

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 | 13 |

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes a technology program to inform parents, staff, and students of their progress and growth in selecting their personalized instruction programs. The proposal includes viable programs that have led to improvements in the past in a variety of academic areas and graduation rates. It is logical for the program to build upon past success by employing some of the same practices that led to improvement in the past such as the AVID program which supports college preparation, a literacy initiative to support teacher training, and the Gear Up program which is credited for raising math scores. Each of the three districts in the consortium provides substantial evidence that each has the capacity to develop and implement programs to support student learning. Parents are notified of their child's scores and an AYP letter has been distributed in the past. The assessment data is also posted on district websites. Effective strategies are described to increase performance across the curriculum.

The proposal does not clearly identify ways in which parents have had access to the data in order to participate and inform program services, specifically if these parents have not had access to technology during the past four years. It does identify that parents are sent an AYP letter each year and that the media announces district performance but this strategy is not described in such a way to demonstrate that effective and informative feedback was received from parents.

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

Salaries and other financial expenditures are available through a web portal for each district on the state's website. The state website also provides academic information. One of the districts in the consortium was recognized for their high level of financial transparency. This

site is described as a model for the remaining schools to provide a transparent system of communication and there is evidence provided that the district provides open budget books and a user-friendly format for anyone who may be interested in tracking their expenditures.

Although each district has a web page, it is not clear whether or not hard copies of the financial records and plans are available to parents and community members at all three sites.

It is unclear how parents without technology in the home are allowed access to participate in reviewing financial and instructional information. Several forums to obtain feedback are mentioned but not specifically described in such a way to ensure that substantial communication is available to low income and ELL parents,

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| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents sufficient evidence that the organizational structure of each of the three districts involved in the consortium includes a Board of Directors, a Board of Trustees, and site based management that includes a body comprised of principals, teachers, staff, parents, and community partners who oversee goals, strategies, and develop revisions at each site to ensure that student achievement is reviewed in order to inform programs that are in place. The state regulation is provided as evidence that the districts have autonomy with the support of the state's education service centers. Parent and student surveys were administered to develop the plan.

It is not clear that the autonomy of the school sites includes support of the implementation of personalized learning environments as the project describes that the management team has selected the personalized system that will be put in place. The evidence that the feedback from other stakeholders was used to develop the system or approve the system is not clear.

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

Evidence is presented that needs for the project were determined through surveys. There is also evidence that collaborative agencies were contacted in order to determine how their assistance might support the goals of the program. The collaborative agencies range from institutes of higher learning to children's centers, to social service agencies and media to broadcast program services to the community. Community support is well described.

Numbers of responses to the surveys are not presented. It is difficult to determine whether or not the percentages of responders indicate a high or low participation rate in determining project goals.

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

| | Available | Score |
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| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 17 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The project is comprehensive in including parents who will receive support through local agencies to improve their ability to work with their children on schoolwork and on college opportunities. Teacher training is specific and connected to student needs and will be effectively supported by partner agencies. After school centers will be developed to provide students with additional opportunities to build their academic skills. The support of and access to local programs and partners (Marsh Madness, Physics Circus, Youth and Adult One Stop services) is a strong approach that will ensure support from the community and increase the opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to expand their readiness for careers and college and to provide academic and social supports. Key goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible are identified.

A process is described to provide screening and ongoing assessments to monitor program and student goals is mentioned but not well defined or described in terms of data analysis or mastery of content necessary for college and career readiness. Successful reform may not be supported by the timeline presented in the proposal.

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| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 16 |
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence that parents will receive support through local agencies to improve their ability to work with their children on schoolwork and on college opportunities. The proposal details summer institute literacy programs for teachers to focus on three specific areas of student needs in reading. Teachers will be trained further in math and sciences with a goal to increase endorsements in math and sciences as well as increasing the number of master reading teachers in the district. This is an ambitious effort to increase the number of high quality teachers. The proposal describes a supportive plan for developing after school centers to provide students with additional opportunities to build their academic skills. The training of center staff is referenced by indicating that any staff referring students to the program will be trained. Key goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible are identified. The project describes comprehensive services from parent engagement to Jumpstart to teacher training that defines an extensive support for children. Specific details are provided to identify the areas of training for the leadership (principals) that support increased effectiveness.

It is not clear if the after school opportunities or opportunities for parents and teachers are building upon current services or will be new centers. Goals list services to be developed in the future and do not connect them with any services that may or may not be currently in place. Regular and timely reports to parents and other stakeholders are not cited in order to provide feedback and information to assist in revision of program goals as needed, specifically in the areas of teacher quality and principal effectiveness.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points) | 15 | 12 |

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

An appropriate management structure is defined which includes a management team to oversee day-to day project services to the participants. A sustainability team is also described that will support the consortium's effort to maintain services. Using coaches to assist in staff development is a justified strategy for improving teacher quality. It is also a strength that a family engagement specialist will be a member of the key personnel. This indicates a commitment of the district to reach out to parents and provide them with training to support their children's education. The plan intends to include frequent assessment, which is a positive strategy for identifying student needs, and address them before the end of the school year. It indicates that interventions will be in place to target the needs of struggling students. Evidence is provided to support the consortium's proposal to contract with an external evaluator for review of data in each of the sub-projects identified to define a high quality plan. The proposal includes a reference to 'non-traditional' methods for students with disabilities or language deficits to demonstrate mastery.

The 'non-traditional' methods for students to demonstrate mastery are not described and this opportunity is not described as available to all students.

The project does not describe roles and specific duties of each of the members of the various teams listed as support to the project in such a way that leadership, flexibility, and autonomy to work with schedules and governance structure is credible. Although a chart is provided to denote management structures, in a three-district consortium a more tightly woven network of communication and support is needed to provide overlapping responsibilities for equitable services.

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| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project presents evidence that it intends to provide access to technology to students who may not otherwise have the opportunity through tablets and increased opportunities. It is appropriate and reasonable that the project also provides parents with access to the technology portal to monitor student progress. Providing out of school activities to all students in the consortium demonstrates the intention to increase learning opportunities for all.

The proposal does not explain how parents without access to technology will be able to monitor their child's progress or provide feedback to grant management. The project is vague in describing specific activities that involve technology to create rigorous learning environments. The role of the educators is also not well described in terms of use of technology, materials, and resources that specifically will lead to increased analysis of student information.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 7 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides evidence that both summative and formative evaluations will provide feedback as necessary to inform the participants of program progress. The proposal also describes a system to establish ongoing feedback and improvement to be designed. It is reasonable that the project also includes establishment of access to a district portal to obtain data for analysis regarding the program’s goals and performance measures. Presentations, online publications, and webinars are sound strategies for communicating with stakeholders. Focus groups are an appropriate component of strategies to obtain feedback. The use of an external evaluation system for each sub-project within the proposal is evidence of a system to monitor each of the consortium's major goals.</p> <p>The proposal does not describe a current system within the consortium that currently is available to provide a system for continuous improvement. The districts leadership teams meet monthly, however it is unclear how the nature and agenda of these meetings will support continuous feedback to the project. The feedback loops presented are not well explained or documented. The frequency of presentations and publications and webinars is not clear. The format of presentations to parents is limited.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A variety of strategies are presented to communicate with parents ranging from group and private meetings to access to technology portals. It is strength to include students in evaluating their own progress towards success. The use of social media to communicate with stakeholders is innovative and timely.</p> <p>Details are lacking in terms of frequency of contacts, agendas, and topics for discussion that are relevant to the proposal’s goals. The proposal is also vague in describing how feedback from the stakeholders will be considered and applied to grant goals and measures. There is no evidence that feedback from stakeholders will be used to revise plans and deliverables. The plan presented is undeveloped and does not describe a systematic process for ongoing communication. Frequency and regularity of actions described is not presented. Although the use of social media is included, the details are not provided on which systems (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) will be used.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides evidence that progress monitoring and other formative and summative assessments will be used to measure the progress of the students as a whole and for each subgroup. The proposal includes a social/emotional performance measure, which is reasonable to support high-risk students. Reasonable grade appropriate performance measures are described.</p> <p>The proposal does not describe which assessments will be used for monitoring progress except for the annual summative assessment given to students in grades 3-10. The project is unable to describe the Pre-K assessments, or K-2 assessments in use in the districts of the consortium. There is no evidence that all three districts in the consortium will have the ability to monitor the project through the use of consistent measurements. There is no baseline or benchmarking measurement described for the social/emotional performance measure. No rationale is presented for the selected performance measures, specifically for the social/emotional self awareness measure. The baseline data for the measure to assess the number of students receiving instruction from highly qualified teachers is not explained. Subgroup growth targets are not ambitious and do not indicate an effort or expectation to accelerate learning.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A wide variety of tools are described by the project in order to collect data for analysis and provide feedback to project leadership for analysis. It is strength to provide such a variety of instruments ranging from focus groups, to interviews and surveys, to online assessment data. The proposal provides evidence that focus groups will meet and will include students as an effective strategy for obtaining feedback to modify program services to meet student needs. Involving parents and teachers in focus groups is also a reasonable strategy for continuous improvement. The data cited to be collected from surveys and focus groups is well organized by topics related to phases of the program implementation.</p> <p>Although the project describes a variety of tools for data collection, it does not present a clear and viable timeline for data analysis nor</p> | | |

does it present information to support a data analysis or progress monitoring system that would provide feedback and allow for revisions to project goals and timelines more frequently than annually. The type of data to be collected from focus groups is noted as 'anecdotal'. This makes it unclear how the information collected will inform the project's services.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Funds are identified to support each of the proposal's major goals and initiatives, referred to as projects. The PreK-3 project budget presented is reasonable to support the required staffing for providing adequate services to the students in this group. The proposal is also justified in recruiting community volunteers to work with students in the out of school project. Funding from the local districts will also be used in the out of school program, including 21st Century funds. The district will be contracting with local providers and agencies currently in place to serve students in the out of school project. The current AVID program is presented as a source of support. The project provides complete budget information broken down by program year and by sub-project goals. The proposal includes detailed information to identify the sources of other funding that will be used to support each sub-project. Rationales are presented to justify all budget line items requested as reasonable and adequate to support the plan's implementation. There is detailed evidence that clearly identifies funding to support the teachers' summer training opportunities. The partnerships with local community members, businesses, and institutes of higher learning are evidence that the district will receive support from external sources to deliver learning opportunities for teachers and students. The budget clearly identifies funds to support student field trips to support their participation in out of school opportunities.</p> <p>It is not clear that financial assistance will come from other sources to sustain the grant services after the four- year project ends, although a sustainability team is clearly identified in order to address issues that may arise and to develop sustainability of local partnerships and collaborations that will continue to support the program.</p> | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal presents a feasible system to create a sustainability committee across the three districts in the consortium to review and evaluate the expenditures of the grant and to inform future decision-making regarding budgetary concerns. School Board presidents from each of the three districts and from the Education Service Center provided supported through memoranda of understanding included in the proposal. The state of Texas Education Agency declined to comment, however, it is noted that their policy is not to comment on applications. It is positive to note that although only one mayor commented on the proposal, the comments included feedback to the grant writer was addressed. The sustainability plan presented addresses each of the key goals of the program. Training for new teachers is also addressed. The level of professional development and incentives for teachers to participate would indicate that successful professional development would support future program services in instruction. The level of partnerships with local agencies, community members, and institutes of higher learning is well described and would support continuation of services after program funding ends.</p> <p>With the exception of the college and career subproject, the sustainability plan timelines are annual and would be better supported through more frequent reviews.</p> | | |

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal includes partnerships with many local agencies ranging from universities to federally funded programs that are already in place within the districts' structure. These partnerships provide evidence that the consortium will have support from outside of the districts as well as from the internal systems of the three districts of the consortium. A set of seven projects is described to support students from PreK-3 through high school and college readiness. Although a system to analyze data does not appear to be in place at this time, the project proposes developing a system to provide feedback and analyze data by project students as a whole and by subgroups. The seven projects described provide evidence that no more than ten population level desired results are the focus of the consortium.</p> | | |

The proposal is weakened by a limited description of how teachers will increase their capacity to work with high-risk students. There is a minimal description of how parents will be engaged and involved in the project activities. The performance targets are not identified in such a way to accelerate learning for all subgroups and hold the students and the project to minimal growth targets, which vary, by subgroup indicating that some students are not expected to achieve to higher levels through project services.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
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| Absolute Priority 1 | | Met |
| Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>There are multiple opportunities for students to increase access to experiences and knowledge identified through collaboration with local institutes of higher learning, community resources, and by engaging parents. The project includes an out of school program that will extend the learning day and provide further technology opportunities for students. The consortium specifies other programs such as Gear Up, AVID, and Jumpstart that are currently available and supportive of students from preschool to providing college readiness. This evidence increases the likelihood that students will have access to personalized learning. Teacher supports are identified by topic and include the support of coaches as an effort to expose students to more highly qualified educators. State standards have been adopted.</p> <p>A concern is that growth targets are minimal and vary by subgroup indicating that lower expectations are in place for some subgroups than others. For example, Connally ISD has a growth target of one percent in the first year for African American students while La Vega, another district in the consortium, has a growth rate of two percent in the first year for African American students for college enrollment. Both districts also list different growth rate expectations for white students for college enrollment, which in La Vega are much higher. It is not clear why expectations vary across the districts or the rationale for varying the expectation across the subgroups of students.</p> | | |

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| Total | 210 | 153 |
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0131TX-1 for Education Services Center Region 12

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>The Innovation Collaboration for Personalized Learning (ICPL) includes a system of clearly articulated, overlapping projects that are comprehensive in their approach. The initiatives presented as part of the scope of the 8 Projects are sufficiently exhaustive, and if executed as presented should effect meaningful reform. The ICPL will benefit from its partnership with the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative and four partners working under the BRIC umbrella.</p> <p>(a) The proposal presents evidence of its work in all four core education assurance areas, and convincingly demonstrates ways in which the plans presented in this RtT-D project will build on that work. Texas has not adopted the Common Core State Standards, but the three</p> | | |

districts partnered in this proposal have adopted the state standards known as TEKS. The projects described will provide students with robust exposure to standards and their practical applicability through the Early Literacy and STEM initiatives, in particular. Currently, each district has different data capabilities, but the Portal Project (listed in one location as Project 1: Portal, but referenced as Project 2 elsewhere in the narrative) will create a means to coordinate data systems to make data meaningful and accessible. One of the most promising initiatives presented in several areas in the narrative, although not presented explicitly in the Project list or chart of ICPL Approaches to Meeting RtT-D Goals is the focus on teacher retention, including enhancements surrounding professional development and compensation. The ICPL program recognizes that several schools located within the three districts are suitable targets for its projects and initiatives. A list of previous adjustments that have affected these schools are included in the narrative, but it intends for the PreK - 3 Literacy Project to build on these adjustments.

(b) The proposal presents several lists, graphs and charts to explain its exhaustive list of projects and initiatives. When reviewed together, they present a thorough, ambitious yet achievable approach to reform. The chart of ICPL Approaches to Meeting RtT-D Goals is clear and credible in its outline of the program. The program clearly relies on "teachers with excellent skills," and has documented several ways the districts intend to coach and retain these teachers, including references to new compensation plans. The ICPL program clearly links each of the 8 proposed Projects to at least one of the three goal areas, describing a unique approach to reaching goals that is personalized for this collaboration of districts.

(c) The descriptions of the classroom experiences, explained through a "what a visitor will see" lens, demonstrates a convincing plan to create student-centered environments built on personalization. The proposal describes individualized student goals that will be visible, and will guide student learning and teacher instructional choices. It describes authentic, inquiry-based STEM education. It describes processes of planning and reflections, incorporating effective "chats" among learners. It describes multiple instructional techniques, as well as multiple assessment techniques. It incorporates technology. It references new behavior management systems and professional development to assure successful implementation. The proposal provided a reviewer with a complete picture of a thoroughly personalized learning environment, and the supports necessary to make it successful.

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

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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal is from a Consortium of the Regional 12 Education Service Center (ESC12) (Lead), Connally Independent School District, La Vega Independent School District and Waco Independent School District. The proposal states, in the introduction, that the three districts are among those that struggle most of all the districts served by ESC12. The introduction also provides a detailed, bulleted list of the struggles and needs of each of the 3 districts. The districts have sufficiently demonstrated that they have the ability to achieve ambitious, significant reform.

(a) The Consortium reviewed the STAAR (Texas standardized assessment) scores and college readiness performances from all 3 districts. It surveyed teachers and administrators, and met with key community members. The Consortium determined that reform is needed in all districts, and that no school is performing above state averages in any subject or indicator, so all schools should participate. This determination is reasonable. The proposal does note gaps in performance levels and in the percentages of high needs students, and will target these schools for more intense services. This plan describes an appropriate allocation of available resources.

(b) The proposal includes an exhaustive list of participating schools.

(c) The proposal includes an exhaustive list of the total number of participating students, the number of participating students who are high need, the number of participating students designated low-income, the percentage of students from low-income families, and the number of participating educators, among other quantified data provided in the school demographic chart.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal articulates a clear purpose: Through local personalized education, raise student achievement, decrease the achievement gap across student groups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The proposal section includes a comprehensive chart of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes/objectives, and most significantly, ambitious yet achievable long-term impacts. This high quality plan demonstrates fidelity to the RtT-D project goals and comprehensive initiatives included in the vision. The plan is extensive and exhaustive in its inclusion of overlapping yet cooperative plans that include goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables, and responsible persons. The projects interweave activities and initiatives to achieve desired results, but assign sufficient personnel to independent responsibilities to eliminate propensity for over assigning too few key professionals to too many tasks. The high quality plan reaches beyond the schoolhouse in that it proposes to sustain the education reform by forming collaborations with business leaders and other stakeholders. It also proposes to establish a network of services to support learning for high need students and their families. The plan is consistently thorough and comprehensive in its design to impact all students from preschool through high school and into the postsecondary environment. It also provides a thoughtful approach to creating and retaining the high quality teachers that are necessary to effect real positive change at the classroom level.

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| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Note: The proposal explains, in brief, the methodology for determining status and growth, which is reasonable and sound.</p> <p>(a) The proposal provides a comprehensive chart of aggregate and subgroup performance, including baseline information through anticipated performance in the year post-grant. This information includes STAAR Reading and Math scores for grades 3 through 8 for all districts, End of Course examinations in Reading, Writing I, Writing II and Algebra. The PreK-3 chart includes TBD baselines and measures, however.</p> <p>The baseline data in several categories is confusing, as it lists 100% proficiency in some areas as the current baseline, but then lists Year 1 percentage expectations at a lower percentage. In other categories the trajectory included a regression, when it should represent steady improvement. In still other categories, there is simply no data for the baseline for a number lower than can be reported. The state data is not included, so there is no point of comparison regarding the baseline data, although it is listed elsewhere in the narrative that all schools are performing below the state average in all areas.</p> <p>(b) The proposal includes a comprehensive chart describing an ambitious yet achievable trajectory towards nearly eliminating the achievement gap. This chart does include state level data for the comparison group.</p> <p>(c) The proposal describes a reasonable plan to increase graduation rates in all three districts. It proposes close the gap between the lowest rate of the three districts and the state, but is reasonable in its goal in that it does not expect to exceed the state rate for this district before the end of the grant; to exceed the state rate in the second lowest district, which is currently below the state rate; while increasing the positive gap between the highest rate of the three districts and the state, indicating it is not satisfied with its current rate although that is already exceeding the state rate.</p> <p>(d) The proposal acknowledges that current college enrollment rates are very low, and establishes a plan to increase those rates to percentages that are ambitious yet achievable.</p> <p>(e) The Consortium chose to address the option criteria. It cites the low GPA earned by the students of the three districts in their first year of college as a reason why these students ultimately do not earn degrees. The proposal reasonably asserts that the ICPL's project focus on college preparation will lead to more students' success once they matriculate in postsecondary institutions. The proposal establishes ambitious goals for postsecondary degree attainment for all three districts.</p> | | |

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 | 12 |
| <p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal takes records of success by district. For one district (La Vega), it describes an increase in scores over the last four years, and points specifically to cumulative gains in various areas. It also cites a Blue Ribbon award for closing the achievement gap in 2010, but like some other accomplishments noted, these are not four year trends as far as can be discerned through the narrative. The La Vega narrative also includes a history of its participation in programs designed to raise student achievement. It calls these three initiatives successful, but does not provide data to support the claim of success.</p> <p>For the second district (Connally ISD), it cites "outstanding" and "significant" achievement gains in various grade levels and content areas, but does not provide actual data to support these claims. It does provide percentage data to support its claim of an increase in graduation rates over the past four years.</p> <p>For the third district (Waco ISD), it cites a specific percentage point increase in achievement data over four years for three grades/content areas. It also describes partnerships for professional development that led to gains.</p> <p>The improvement in learning outcomes describes are not extensive, although where noted and substantiated are laudable.</p> <p>The proposal devotes a portion of its response in this section to describing increases in graduation rates across all three districts. The increase in the percentage of students determined to be college-ready is impressive, although the overall percentages are still low. The proposal attributes much of the gains to the use of the AVID system, and because of this makes the reasonable assertion that the ICPL program will continue and extend the use of the AVID system. The proposal also attributes some of Waco ISD's gains to its participation in the Gear Up program, and highlights the positive trends in achievement over time. The proposal is confusing in that it does not specify ways it might try to build upon or extend the perceived success of the Gear Up program through replication of some the initiative's practices in the other two districts.</p> | | |

The proposal explains in sufficient detail how it treats and responds to the release of student performance data through the Texas Education Agency. This includes its comprehensive process for receiving data, analyzing and disaggregating data, explaining data, and using data to make instructional decisions at the classroom level. The proposal references the media coverage of data, and the release of data to parents. Reports are also available on the district websites. The proposal does not reference any ways it has reached out to parents to explain the data further. It therefore does not sufficiently involve parents in this part of the reform plan.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Consortium indicates that actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration is made public in several ways, including the Texas Education Agency website. The line items of the reports on the site comprehensively include actual salaries for all of the categories listed. The proposal also lists the additional financial information available through each district. The transparency by district ranges from excellent transparency in Waco ISD to high transparency in Connally ISD to seemingly no district level of financial transparency in La Vega. The proposal indicates it will adopt the extensive example of financial transparency modeled by Waco across all three districts. In addition, the proposal cites it will make information and data accessible to parents through the Portal Project (one of the 8 projects detailed in other sections of the proposal). This high level of transparency will increase accountability over the financial aspects of the reform plan. It will also increase vested interest among stakeholders in that they will be able to access data regarding the grant funds and appropriate use.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal points to the applicable parts of the *Texas Education Code* that directly speak to the autonomy necessary to conduct the activities proposed in this plan. The ESC12 Board of Directors and the district Boards of Trustees have sufficient and reaching autonomy required to make the implementation of the proposed plan feasible. This includes the ESC12 Board of Directors power to spend grant funds in accordance with the terms of the contract. The State of Texas has also mandated a process to encourage site-based management. Each site includes an advisory committee, and these committees of stakeholders will be closely involved with the implementation and possible revision of the RTT-D program activities. This structure not only permits the desired autonomy, but also establishes a system of accountability participated in by stakeholders at the site (campus/school) level.

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

15

11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The engagement of students, families, teachers, and principals, as well as other stakeholders is strong. ESC12 (Lead agency for the proposal) involved LEA superintendents, target schools' principals, teachers, counselors, and partners in the planning process. It also conducted surveys and multiple planning forums at several points in the process, which would lead to greater opportunities to offer input into the proposal plans. ESC12 involved students and their parents in the process, a decision which is thorough in its design to effect vested interest in the program. The student surveys assessed information critical to the plan, including academic needs and postsecondary plans. It is apparent that the survey results helped direct the design of the final plan. There is, however, no response rate data, and no evidence that the consortium reaches out via both paper and electronic surveys.

(a)(ii) The proposal indicates that 75% of the teachers in Waco ISD responded positively to a survey about new initiatives. This information is ambiguous as it does not clearly indicate that the same percentage actually support this proposal. And although Waco employs over 74% of the participating teachers, the proposal does not indicate the percentage of the remaining teachers that support the proposal.

(b) The body of the proposal and the appendices include letters from key stakeholders, including institutions of higher education, educational organizations, health organizations, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and business partners. The body of the narrative also includes a detailed chart listing the project partners, the partners' roles in the project, and ESC12's roles in relation to each partner. This chart presents a convincing plan that not only gathers the support of key stakeholders, but also establishes a system of responsibilities and associations that will increase stakeholders' interest in the project's success. The letters found in the appendix also include letters from the mayors of three towns.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal describes in detail a longitudinal personalized learning framework. The framework is ambitious yet achievable, and it is complete in that it addresses the criteria established by the grant. Students' academic performance will be initially assessed, including college and career readiness. Parents and ICPL staff will place students on suitable, individual paths, and develop individual learning plans. Progress will be regularly monitored and assessed. Supports, accommodations and strategies will be accessed to fit students' and families' needs, so that students receive the assistance necessary to meet goals. Information regarding student performance and progress will be accessible via the proposed database.

This section of the proposal describes in exhaustive detail a convincing plan to implement 6 distinct yet related projects. The charts of project details include key goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables, responsible person(s), and the specific activities required to complete each project. These project plans are high quality and extensive, and represent a comprehensive thought process. The activities for each project include essential steps for success.

The establishment of timelines, deliverables and responsible person(s) is focused and supports a system of accountability for each project. The assignment of project responsibilities is sufficiently spread out among responsible staff to prevent an environment in which a few persons might be engaged in too many initiatives. Therefore, although there are many activities and initiatives ongoing simultaneously, the organizational and accountability structure is placed to ensure that there is oversight over each one.

This is a summary list of how the projects defined in this section are focused to meet the criteria of (C)(1). Project 1 as described here will create a data system to meet criteria a.ii. and b.iv. Project 2 as described here will create a preK to 3rd grade approach to meet criteria a. i. ii. iii., b.i. ii. iii. v. Project 3 as described will create an out-of-school program to meet criteria a.i.ii.iii.v, b.i.ii.iii.iv.v., c. Project three cuts across criteria in its comprehensive approach to serve students at low-performing schools in ways that will allow them to meet academic standards and be college and career ready through a personalized experience. Project 4 as described expands the use of digital tools and STEM instruction excellence to meet criteria a.i.ii.iii.v., b.i.ii.iii.c. Project 5 as described will foster effective career preparation to achieve a.iv, b.i. Project 6 will foster effective preparation for college to meet criteria a.i.ii.iv., b.i.ii.iii.iv.

The projects described in the chart target all students from the preK level through secondary. They key goals include goals for comprehensive program reform, instructional program reform, professional development, student performance, wrap-around services, assessment and monitoring, and data management. The activities involve partner organizations, parents and families, as well as the school personnel and students. Levels of personalization and individual goal-setting vary appropriately by project. The only criteria to be somewhat lacking is the exposure to diverse cultures, contents and perspectives. Exposure to diverse perspectives is achieved, only in part, through alternative settings such as those described in the out-of-school program or the dual-enrollment program.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

To successfully respond to the Teaching and Leading criteria, ESC12 recognizes that a key component of comprehensive implementation is the attraction and retention of effective and highly effective educators. In the introduction to this section, before the inclusion of a project chart, ESC12 convincingly demonstrates that it recognizes the need to define effectiveness and to identify effective and highly effective teachers. ESC12 proposes linking professional development to the teacher and principal evaluation process, which will increase levels of effectiveness by targeting educators' deficiencies. ESC12 also presents an innovative approach to attracting the educators rated effective and highly effective to the lowest performing schools. ESC12 describes a system of incentives, rewards, or compensation reform through the development of an effective Human Capital Management System (HCMS). ESC12 adds to the uniqueness of this approach by stating that districts may select from a menu of options to implement the various elements of the HCMS in their schools. The project will monitor student progress to adjust the program, including the improvement of the individual and collective practice of the ICPL educators. This describes a system of accountability for educator placement and effectiveness.

Project 7: Teaching and Learning in itself represents an ambitious yet achievable plan to improve teaching and learning within the districts. The plan includes a robust and thorough chart comprised of key goals, rationales, timelines, deliverables and responsible personnel.

The extension of the AVID program is one feasible way to extend the personalized learning environment while promoting a culture of college readiness. It has been effective at particular grade levels in the past, and to believe an extension to other grade levels may also produce positive effects is reasonable. There is a plan in place to support professional development for the successful extension of AVID. Deliverables for the plan include an impact to school wide structures, which is designed to produce higher levels of student achievement in part through better attendance and a reduction in behavior problems.

The provision for personalized tutoring for high needs students will produce the kind of personalized learning environment the project intends to create. The tutoring will be accompanied by routine progress monitoring and data analysis. There is a system for regular feedback from teachers to students. The district has detailed plans for sustained professional development for the implementation of the personalized tutor program. The tutor program will utilize digital resources to accomplish its goals.

Project 7 presents an extensive seven part plan to raise the quality and effectiveness of teachers, and to increase the number of effective

teachers. This includes professional development, but also provides opportunities for endorsements and certifications. These recognition systems will appropriately raise the level of professionalism among effective and highly effective staff. The plan also focuses on a system of accountability for teachers that includes a basis on student performance.

This project also details plans for strengthening leadership with Principal Leadership Training. The project presents a reasonable plan to roll out training using an annual cohort system. The deliverable indicates that trained principals will be assessed as effective by the end of their second year after training, but does not indicate the consequences for a principal who receives a lower rating.

By presenting a strong plan to increase the number of effective educators, and a system of accountability for effectiveness, more students will have access to teachers and principals rated effective or highly effective.

The plan does not sufficiently address students' personalized academic interests. There are insufficient opportunities for students to access unique curricular and instructional experiences based on their personalized academic interests.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The proposal describes an extensive consortium governance structure that when staffed appropriately will be able to provide the necessary support and services to all participating schools. The comprehensive Management Plan includes a partnership with the US DOE Office of Innovation and Improvement, through which the ICPL Project will share verified quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The shared data analysis will complement a system of accountability that also includes an External Evaluator. The organizational structure for the project includes both district and site based committees and subcommittees, with access to the ICPL Grant Management Team and RTT-D Project Director. The Project 8: CIPL Project Administration chart notes that coordination and communication will allow staff for each project to focus on their responsibilities. This is a sound provision that will allow the responsible personnel referenced elsewhere in the proposal to maintain focus on their key goals, deliverables, and timelines.
- (b) The plan references its flexibility in that it will allow for parent and community input, and will handle local and state queries. The plan does not describe a project that provides school leadership teams with the sufficient flexibility and autonomy referenced in the criteria. There was no reference to that kind of site-based autonomy in this section of the proposal.
- (c) The project presents a proposal for non-traditional ways to demonstrate mastery through individual plans. The details of this part of the plan are not fully documented here. It also details plans to get students to mastery levels. It does not sufficiently describe a plan that would permit earned credit based on mastery, and not the amount of time spent on a topic.
- (d) The plan presents a feasible plan for giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, including the use of the state STAAR assessment, End of Course assessments, and then support for students to access non-traditional demonstrations of mastery provided in individual plans.
- (e) The plan specifically provides for a Language Specialist who will oversee modifications for ELLs and students who require additional assistance. The associated resources are not presented thoroughly. It is difficult to determine the potential efficacy of the specialist without details regarding resources.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides convincing evidence that all participating students, parents, educators and stakeholders will have access to necessary content, tools and learning resources both in and out of school, regardless of income. For students who may not have access to personal technology, the project will provide access beyond the school day, including Internet access, for both parents and students. This access includes evening hours. Tablets that are available during the day will also be available for checkout with parent permission. Staff at the Community Centers will be available to assist students and parents in the use of these tools. Teachers will have access to the tools beyond the school day, as well. Parents, students and educators may use these devices and this access to use the Internet to access student progress reports, and to monitor progress on an instructional tutorial program. The level of available technical support, beyond the Community Center staff, is not detailed in the proposal. The Project 1 Data Portal supports the use of student performance data and its access, but it appears to be without a comprehensive interoperable system that includes access to human resources data and budget data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 15 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides a comprehensive and inclusive plan for continuous improvement. The plan includes key personnel, goals, associated activities, and timeline for deliverables. The project will fund key personnel, both project personnel and external consultants, to take on the evaluation and analysis tasks. The evaluation cycle is complete in that it includes formative evaluations and a summative evaluation, with processes at every level to create a focused, systemic, climate of ongoing refinement. The ICPL program will support an intricate system of regularly established meetings as part of the improvement process. These meetings will take part at the Consortium leadership level, at the district levels and as the site levels. Reports on progress will be provided twice each year to all stakeholders through a variety of media. The External Evaluator will also facilitate focus groups that are comprehensive and inclusive in their participation.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal is innovative in its plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The plan provides details for how it will communicate with parents, students, educators, community partners, and funders. The plan provides for bilingual communication (Spanish). It provides uniformity in its planned approaches by referenced face-to-face meetings, electronic and regular mail, Websites (including a dedicated Website), and social media. It is therefore thorough in its intent to reach all audiences, regardless of income level, age, technological proficiency, etc. The plan does not include a clear projection of the implementation of its plans for communication, however. The plan references personnel, but the only staff member assigned to oversight is the Project Director, who is assigned multiple responsibilities across projects. The communication activities are described, but the deliverables and timelines are not clearly articulated for all activities. The system of accountability for communication with key stakeholders is not strong, in that parties responsible for oversight for individual contacts are not clearly defined.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides its rationale for choosing assessments to monitor progress at the levels indicated. It also provides information regarding why targets are set at certain levels. The charts are thorough and comprehensive, and address the criteria set for the aggregate and for each participating grade level span. This is comprehensive in its inclusion of non-cognitive or social-emotional indicators of growth. The charts also include FAFSA and college- career-ready targets for the secondary population. The charts include the number and percentage of students with highly effective teachers and principals. The plan to scale up the number of students with highly effective teachers and principals follows an ambitious yet achievable trajectory through the post-grant year.</p> <p>The proposal does lists PreK-3 baseline and performance targets as "TBD," and therefore the information presented is insufficient to determine if these measures are ambitious yet achievable. Other student performance trajectories are ambitious yet achievable, but there is no clear presentation of an explanation for the final, expected outcomes.</p> <p>The proposal requires 12 - 14 performance measures, but this plan seems to present at least 16 measures. The plan includes grade levels and subject areas across the district, which presents a wide focus for accountability, analysis and interim responses to performance data. The plan is ambitious in its scope but there is no clear articulation for the process that will be used to conduct review of the data that will be generated.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 5 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evaluation of the plan is thorough in its use of multiple measures with several sources of data, observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The evaluation will gather quantitative data to measure performance objectives and quality of programs and services in the following areas of investment: 1) development phase; 2) professional development; 3) development of Digital Tools; 4) developing project-based assessments; 5) development/acquisition of tools and products; 6) evaluation for continuous improvement. The proposal presents an ambitious yet achievable Evaluation Plan, including objectives, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible personnel. The plan divides oversight duties among project personnel, in ways that reasonably assure that staff can maintain focus on individual areas of responsibility. The Evaluation Plan supports the four core assurance areas RttT-D project criteria, and demonstrates an attention</p> | | |

to project sustainability beyond the term of the grant.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget pages include budget category details for each Project. The budget worksheets include the total grant funds requested for each, as well as the funds from other sources that will be used to support each. The Project Level Budget Narratives include more detailed cost descriptions and justifications. Where applicable, the tables that accompany the narratives are complete with a description of funds from other sources that will be used to support projects. The more detailed narratives break down expenditures by project year. The budget worksheets, narratives, and narrative tables are evidence of sound financial planning to lead to the attainment of ambitious yet achievable goals. The budget narratives are exhaustive in the descriptions of cost and their justifications, down to personnel job descriptions. The costs appear reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>The budget identifies one time costs by zeroing out line items as the project years progress, for example the \$6500 initial cost of equipment for the Data Portal project. It is reasonable that this cost be a one time financial commitment. The project level budget narrative for this project further explains and justifies the one time equipment costs.</p> <p>The budget also documents a Sustainability Plan, including key goals, activities/rationales, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The Sustainability Plan creates a Sustainability Team, which will identify the initiatives of the proposal that have been the most successful, and that should be maintained. The team will provide the districts with the early awareness necessary to plan for the maintenance of specific initiatives through budget allocations. The plan relies on ESC12 to identify and solicit outside funding for this maintenance. There is no contingency plan for the absence of outside funding, however. Sustainability relies on the absorption of funding for certain initiatives, such as the Data Portal, into the regular operational budgets. For other projects, such as tutoring, the district assumes assumption of activities into current structures. For some initiatives, however, the district expects a paradigm or culture shift that will lead to sustained change over time.</p> | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project provides for the establishment of an ICPL Sustainability Team. The plan does not reference State and local government leaders in its scope. The plan acknowledges that by the end of the project period, the initial investment of RTT-D funds will have accomplished its primary goal of reforming how teaching and learning are conducted in the three districts to be more individually student centered with the resulting rise in student academic achievement and college completion. It also details the strong connections that will have been formed with partners and stakeholders, the common data system for future shared projects and ongoing assessment of initiatives begun with this project, and the strategic use of future funds awarded because of the success of this project. The plan presents sound reasoning that these accomplishments will lead to sustainability of the projects begun with this award. The plan does include the key project goals, activities and rationales, timelines, deliverables, and the identification of responsible parties.</p> <p>The sustainability plan is innovative in its prescription to plan for the end of the grant in year two. It is strong in its focus on early awareness of future needs, including financial needs. The Sustainability Plan creates a Sustainability Team, which will identify the initiatives of the proposal that have been the most successful, and that should be maintained. The team will provide the districts with the early awareness necessary to plan for the maintenance of specific initiatives through budget allocations. The plan relies on ESC12 to identify and solicit outside funding for this maintenance. There is no contingency plan for the absence of outside funding, however. Sustainability relies on the absorption of funding for certain initiatives, such as the Data Portal, into the regular operational budgets. For other projects, such as tutoring, the district assumes assumption of activities into current structures. For some initiatives, however, the district expects a paradigm or culture shift that will lead to sustained change over time.</p> | | |

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 4 |
| Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: | | |

(1) The proposal details a single competitive preference priority. The proposal convincingly references an abundance of research that shows a positive school climate is associated with fewer behavior problems, less absenteeism, and fewer health problems; and that students who attend a school with a positive climate are more apt to want to come to school each day. The proposal also references research that indicates that increased levels of parent participation are associated with positive school climate. Finally, the proposal references research linking positive school climate with higher levels of student achievement. These references are all valid, and it is reasonable that a high quality plan acknowledge and build upon this research.

This plan describes a partnership between the ICPL and Community in Schools (CiS), to foster a positive school climate. The CiS will supplement the exhaustive educational supports implemented by the ICPL, and provide social, emotional and behavioral supports. CiS is already working with a limited number of district schools. The grant will allow the Consortium to expand that partnership to serve an additional 3,022 students. The partnership is incomplete, however, in that it does not intend to serve all students who are participating in the ICPL project. In fact, it will serve only the 6 middle schools with the highest percentage of at need students. Although the proposal asserts the ICPL will develop a strategy to scale up the model, the plan to do so is vague, without any further details.

(2) The plan details exactly 10 population level desired results, including six education results and four family and community support results. The link between the ICPL/CiS partnership and the education results lacks specificity. It is unclear that the CiS activity will drive the desired results, although other grant activities may produce these results. Most specifically, it is confusing how a partnership concentrated in six middle schools might have a direct effect on language and literacy instruction at the primary and elementary levels.

(3) The partnership will track indicators in the aggregate and at the student level through the use of FACTS (Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff). The proposal describes a tool used by school staff to compile student information so a support plan may be created. It is unclear how the compiled data will lead to successful intervention for the majority of students not included in the partnership. What is more clear and justified in the plan is how the data will improve results for participating students. The plan is ambiguous in its statement that ICPL personnel will develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the students in the highest needs schools to other high-needs students in the three districts. The plan offers no detail or timeline for how and when this will occur. The plan does provide the desired results for improvement over time. The results are ambitious yet achievable, but it is unrealistic to expect the family and community supports results to be widespread beyond those schools in the immediate partnership.

(4) The partnership provides evidence for the integration of academic and other services by describing interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, literary skills, case management, individual counseling, before- and after-school programs, community service and enrollment in an "academy" environment. The partnership does not provide sufficient details about the "academy" environment. The proposal is ambiguous in the details it provides about the process to design learning plans. The details about when the CiS is involved and to what extent are unclear and confusing.

(5) The plan to build capacity in the schools is lacking in detail and direction. The plan specifies that the school staff will be responsible for collecting student information through FACTS. The staff will analyze the data, and recommend students for CiS intervention. It is unclear that the district or school staff will be trained, or will be qualified to provide the levels and types of interventions that CiS will provide, such as individual counseling. The External Evaluator will gather and analyze data to determine how the project and Consortium resources can be re-distributed for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty. The plan does not qualify the plan by committing to a redistribution, and there is no evidence provided that allows the reviewer to discern the outcome if resources are lacking. The Family Engagement Specialist and a System of Support are created as part of the plan, but the details of how these teams work with parents is unclear.

(6) The plan does provide a chart that sufficiently establishes performance measures, but the measures are unclear in that they do not reflect earlier performance measure expectations established in the proposal. In addition, the PreK-3 baselines and targets are "TBD," eliminating the ability to judge them as ambitious or achievable.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The plan presented is high quality and thorough in its ability to maintain focus on the core educational assurance areas. There is a continuous focus on college and career readiness through the adoption of standards and assessment of student proficiency in relation to standards, the creation of a robust data system including the use of data analysis to continually inform the reform activities, the identification and development of effective and highly effective teachers and the means to provide a reward/recognition/incentive system to assure retention, and a focus on closing the achievement gap by turning around low performing schools and increasing graduation rates and college/career readiness among graduations. The plan provides a complex, comprehensive system of eight Projects, and each project is described in comprehensive detail, including systems of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and oversight. The systems of project

and initiatives provide a plan to accelerate student achievement, and to measure acceleration via clearly articulated assessments and score benchmarks. The plan also includes initiatives to address the academic needs of students, such as tutoring, access to technology, instructional interventions via individualized plans, and access to out of school options.

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 210 | 176 |
|--------------|------------|------------|



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0131TX-2 for Education Services Center Region 12

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Texas Region 12 Education Service Center and three Local Education Agencies (a formed Consortium) articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision to address the needs and of three independent school districts in the Waco, Texas region. The proposed project is titled as Innovation Collaborative for Personalized Learning (ICPL). The Consortium outlines an 8 sub-project plan grounded in the vision of changing the culture of the three independent school districts included in this proposal. The change targets a comprehensive paradigm shift in instructional practices. The shift would move the focus of instruction from being teacher-centered to the teacher as a facilitator. This shift in instructional practices that is developed based upon Texas academic standards and assessment fully supports the use of personalized learning environments where students move from being passive learners to self-directed, critical thinkers ready for college and careers. The proposed vision is perfectly aligned with the four core educational assurances defined for this notice.

The 8 sub-project goals identified within this plan are organized and presented clearly to align with goals of this notice. Each notice goal is clearly linked to the one or more of the sub-project goals. The project goals seem reasonable yet ambitious as well.

A detailed view into the personalized classroom experience is provided within the plan. The view shows supports the shift in instructional paradigms mentioned proposed previously where students are actively engaged on a personal learning path with teachers as guides. The learning environment is dynamic in that students and teachers are sharing and working together with each other as well as experts using a variety of resources and technology. The view mirrors rich interactions that might be seen in the world beyond the walls of a school.

The deep partnerships with institutes of higher learning contributes strong integration and support for providing best instructional practices beyond the expectations of the Texas academic standards for K-12 and for offering support with outreach programs to expand the "world" for students. Additionally, this high quality plan includes opportunities for comprehensive real-world experiences that extend beyond standards based curriculum with the partnerships with the Center for Reservoir and Aquatic Science Research, School of Engineering and Computer Sciences, Mechanical Engineering, and The Center for Astrophysics, Space Physics and Engineering Research. Furthermore the community and additional higher education partnerships with the University of Texas Health Center (Houston) and the Reading and Language Arts center from University of Texas at Austin provides a plethora of opportunities for students to explore their interests and will surely expand students (teachers and parents too) their view of the world and possibilities for their college and career opportunities. Ultimately, the additional resources and partnerships will allow the creation of more personalized learning environments by connecting students to the exciting world and opportunities for the their future. Relevance between school coursework and real life application will be provided to increase high school graduation rates, college enrollment, and mastery of standards for college and career readiness. The Consortium articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision and earns a high score for this criterion.

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Consortium proposes a high quality approach to implementing the articulated plan across all grade levels K-12 for three selected school districts for this reform effort. The applicant provides a brief explanation of the selection process for schools selected to participate. Schools were selected based upon STAAR scores and surveys of teachers and administrators. All schools from the three districts were selected because of their low performing scores and they meet the criteria for this notice. Other districts/schools outside of those selected were not mentioned. A total of 18,771 students will be participating with 86% as identified as students from low-income families, with 10,948 students identified as high-need students. The number of educators included were noted as 1,160. A list of the three school districts and the schools within each of the districts is provided within the application along with individual school demographic data.

The Applicant scores extremely high for the details provided in regard to the approach to implementation yet one point was deducted for not fully disclosing the other district/schools that were not included.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a chart of the Logic Model used to develop and implement this project. The chart includes the Inputs, Outputs, as well as the supported activities and Outcomes expected. Long-term impact of this articulated plan is also included within the table.

The applicant clearly identifies the project implementation goals.

- Use academically rigorous standards and high-quality assessments as established by the Texas Education Agency to determine student proficiency status and growth toward college and career readiness
- Increase the number of students who enroll in, and obtain degrees in postsecondary education
- Attract and keep proficient educators by expanding effective support to teachers and principals; reforming and improving teacher professional development in personalizing learning, improving compensation, and establishing retention policies that encourage and reward effective teachers;
- Create an easy-to-use tool for accessing data that will inform decisions and improve instruction, with training and support for employing the data, and making information more accessible to parents, teachers and the community;
- Use innovative, engaging and effective approaches to turn-around the 13 struggling schools in the Collaboration;
- Sustain the project's education reform by collaborations among business leaders, educators, and other stakeholders to continue to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps, as well as reinvigorating math and science education through our partnership with a major university research group;
- Increase the number of low-income and disadvantaged preschoolers who are prepared to enrolled in high-quality early learning programs; and
- Establish a network of services to support learning for high need students and their families.

The expected Long Term Impact calls for improvements in teaching and learning that would decrease achievement gaps and increase graduation rates and students preparedness for college and/or careers. The project implementation goals as described are clearly supportive of the Long Term Impact planned.

While the applicant presents a well-organized, high-quality Logic Model Plan, with clear detailed support. The applicant scores in the lower portion of the high range for this criterion with a few points for not clearly providing evidence of scaling up or translating this reform beyond the participating schools

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

"Changing the culture" is the vision expressed by the Applicant for this educational reform effort. Within the current summative assessments, State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) annual assessments and end of course assessments, the Applicant identified upward trends across the majority of grade levels and subject areas. Between the baseline years of 2011-12 and 2012-13, a few areas reported a regression in proficiency i.e. 4th Grade Reading overall for all subgroups, 6th Grade Reading for all subgroups except Hispanic. Possible reasons for the decline for those grade levels and subjects were decline was noted were not explained.

The applicant provided ambitious yet achievable annual goals for students that will be served by this proposed plan as well as goals for

subgroups. Only a baseline for 2012-13 was provided.

Graduation rates for 2011-12 were provided but graduation rates for 2012-13 were not provided, an explanation was not provided for the missing data. The proposed goals for graduation rates seem reasonable when looking at them in increments of numbers, but in reality they are a little over ambitious given the length of this proposed reform effort. Moving a full percentage point each year when the overall percentage is already at 93% for the Connally ISD is quite aggressive. Yet, with lower current graduation rates at Waco it might be possible to move from 76% to 80% within four years.

For college enrollment, the applicant set expected goals of 48% for Connally ISD. When paired with expected goal of 98% graduation rate, the expected college enrollment rate does not seem ambitious given the vision of changing the culture. Furthermore in comparison with Waco ISD where the expected goal for overall graduation rate in the last year of the project is 80%, yet the college enrollment expected goal is 44%. The disparity between the two given factors fails to provide support for this criterion being considered ambitious.

The Post-Secondary degree attainment goals seem to also be a little over ambitious making it unlikely that the proposed project will achieve the set annual goals. Given that changing the culture will require time for the shift to occur. Significantly increasing Postsecondary degree attainment in SY 2013-14 at the rates projected in the plan are unrealistic. The projections show an expected increase of 4-10% increase between SY 2012-13 to SY 2013-2014 and then another expected increase of 2-3% for SY 2013-2014- 2014-2015. The narrative fails to address or provide evidence to support such significant increases prior to the implementation of this project.

Changing the culture of teaching and learning will require a period of adjustment for the teachers and students as a paradigm shift is made to the instructional model. Students and teachers will need to learn and master their new roles. In reviewing the expected annual goals, there seems to be no consideration for this shift. While the goals set are quite ambitious, the likelihood for achieving them is decreased given the shift from teacher centered to student centered instructional approach housed within rigorous standards and professional development of teachers. For the reasons stated, the applicant earns a middle range score for this criterion with loss of points for unrealistic annual goals that fail to recognize and account for the paradigm shift.

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 shares a track record of success for advancing student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps in regard to reading, math, and science on various grade levels between the three school districts included in this proposed reform effort. The improved performance and track record begin in 2010 and is credited to various targeted initiatives, partnerships with institutions of higher learning, and the implementation of research-based strategies. A 4 year record of increased graduation rates is reported for all three school districts with LaVegta reporting the greatest increase rates. While the Applicant reports a record of increased student learning outcomes and decreased achievement gaps, the three schools continue to perform below the Texas state averages.

A concentrated and purposeful ongoing initiative for providing research-based strategies is detailed by the Applicant with data to support the significant increases in academic performance by Waco ISD. An increase in science and social studies performance was realized and noted as a by-product of increased reading performance scores. The applicant states that increased concentrations on developing strong reading/literacy skills has directly influenced performance across the curriculum. Many additional programs are identified within the application with some noting the implementation through a partnership with Baylor University which has provided research based assistance. The Applicant provides strong examples of achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest-performing schools with the most significant difference as an added benefit of implementing effective reading strategies with the increase in science and social studies.

Student performance data is made available to the public via the Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System website. The web address is provided within the application document. The Applicant states that the data is released to that it is easily understood by teachers, parents, and community members. It is not clearly stated that the data is made available to students, but the data is readily available to the community which includes the students. Members of the community do receive performance data in a multitude of medias.

Overall, the measures taken and outlined in this application are impressive in that this Consortium can offer data to support an ambitious yet clearly achievable reform movement to increase student performance in science and social studies by targeting reading performance. A record of success and conditions for reform are clearly presented. The Applicant earns full points for this criterion.

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| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In regard to transparency of processes, practices, and investments, the Applicant states that all three school districts included in this planned reform project report actual school-level expenditures on the Texas Education Agency website in annual report form. Instructional staff, teachers and non-personnel expenditures are reported on the state website. Additionally, 2 of the school districts (Connally & Waco offer additional transparency on their school district websites. WACO school district has been recognized for the degree of transparency they offer to the public. However, LA Vega has no district level transparency.</p> <p>While transparency is clearly evident for all three school districts in the application, the La Vega school district does not seem as open and free with sharing their financial processes, practices, and investments. While the Applicant earns a score in the high range for this criterion, one point is deducted for the slight decrease in transparency offered by LaVega School District.</p> | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant provides a clear overview of the Texas State process for governing public school districts/schools and adequately provides pertinent information with respect to this type of proposed plan that will require implementation of personalized learning environments through the goals outlined previously in the 8 sub-projects. Policies and provisions of the Texas Education Code as well as descriptions for the legal power/and or duty of the ESC 12 Board of Directors are clearly provided within the narrative as well as support in the Appendix of the proposal application.</p> <p>The ESC 12 Board of Directors provides support for this proposed RTTT-D proposed plan and the Education Code as quoted within the narrative and provided in the Appendix states that the Board of Directors has the legal power and/or duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve programs and activities offered to school districts and campuses. <i>Education Code 8.003(e)</i> • Contract, under rules adopted by the Commissioner for a grant from a public or private organization and spend grant funds in accordance with the terms of the contract. <i>Education Code 8.125</i> <p>Furthermore, the applicant states that the State of Texas mandates a process for decentralizing decisions for the improvement of individual schools. An abbreviated version of the process is described.</p> <p>The information provided provides clear evidence that successful conditions and sufficient autonomy is provided to implement the proposed plan.</p> <p>While the regulations require a specific process for approval on various levels (district/school), the conditions needed for the implementation of this proposed plan is strong and very favorable. The Applicant earns full points for this criterion.</p> | | |
| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points) | 15 | 10 |
| <p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Students, parents, teachers, and principals in the participating school districts (includes all schools) were engaged and provided feedback for this proposed project via surveys. From the surveys area of need were identified and also clearly documented in the application. The total number of participants who returned surveys were not disclosed and the methodology was not provided within the application. However, of those who completed surveys aggregated data was used to as feedback and compared to state and district assessment data.</p> <p>Data was collected directly from teachers responses specifically noted in the application was 75% support from Waco teachers. Results for teachers response from other school districts was not presented in the same detail.</p> <p>Strong letters of support from a variety of organizations were provided in the appendix as well as outlined in table format. The table provided additional information in regard to the "partnership" role shared by the organizations. The partnerships included business community, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, as well as several institutions of higher education.</p> <p>The Applicant scores in the mid-range for this criterion, points were deducted for lack of clarity for the number of participants included in the survey study. Also, little information was provided for "how" the students, families, teachers, and principals of participating schools were sought for the engagement in the survey feedback process.</p> | | |

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

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| | Available | Score |
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| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 18 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant illuminates a high-quality comprehensive plan that will create a longitudinal personalized framework for learning and teaching for all student from K-12. The proposed plan is divided into 8 individual sub-project plans that are interwoven together to support the overarching goal for changing the culture by making a radical shift the educational paradigm. The well-organized tables presented within this section clearly provides exhaustive details for each sub-project with a supportive narrative. Key goals, rationale, timeline, deliverables, and the person(s) and parties responsible are clearly identified. Additionally, activities for each subproject is well documented with specific details about the programs and processes to be employed.

Each of the 8 subproject plans target student engagement in the planning and learning process with a defined link to college and graduation goals. Educators, parents, and other support partnerships will guide students on the journey of setting future goals based upon their personal interests. As part of the goal setting process, students in grade 8 will develop an online portfolio that will be used through grade 12 to track their progress. Additionally, the Applicant describes rich experiences where students will engage in at least one real-life career/job experience in an area of their interest. Furthermore, a planned one stop service center will be provided to help students and their family to explore college opportunities as well as possible employment opportunities. This concentrated effort at the upper grade level builds upon the foundation of concentration placed at the K-7 level where rich personalized learning and teaching experiences are guided by an elaborate data collection system. The data collection system will be used to monitor and provide feedback for the project as well as individual students. Elaborate plans are stated to closely monitor students in identifying high-need students and ensuring they are provided additional support.

A host of back-up support plans including family outreach and one stop services are in place to reach families who might otherwise not be engaged in the educational process of their child. Additional support plans are in place for students such as afterschool and out of school projects including tutoring and MicroSociety where students engage in STEM blended curriculums. The list is quite exhaustive and comprehensive.

The overall proposed plan is of exceptional high quality in that it details the extent to which students, parents, educators, along with partnerships beyond the school district will work together to create a radical change with regard to learning and teaching. For this criterion the Applicant provides a exceptional plan with a multitude of layers to provide high quality learning and teaching through the use of personalized learning environments with the tools and resources to help students in this district to be academically successful and to fully meet the college and career-ready graduation requirements of this notice. While this plan is comprehensive and includes all the necessary supports, the timeline for making such a rational paradigm shift is quite aggressive and the likelihood of achieving the stated goals with the time framework are unrealistic. For the reasons stated, a few points are deducted from this criterion yet the Applicant still scores in the high range.

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| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 18 |
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provides a detailed description for the teaching and leading plan designed for educators and administrators for the 3 school districts included within this proposed plan.

The Applicant has interwoven throughout the 8 sub-projects but specifically addressed in Project -7 . Within Project 7, key goals, rationale, timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible are clearly identified and reasonable. The key goals are realistic and appropriate to support this proposed project. One deficiency noted in the proposed Teaching and Leading criterion is that administrators other than principals are not included within the professional development plan. Additionally the principal training seems somewhat limited and does not include the depth of training required by teachers. Again, while administrator training seems to be limited there is a slight provision for counselor training.

Exceptional training for teachers is provided within this plan. The PD will likely result in teachers being prepared to create personalized learning environments for students.

Strong measures are described within this criterion to monitor the progress and to provide feedback that will inform teachers, principals, and the project coordinator. Overall the Applicant provides a strong plan for teaching and leading and scores in the high range with only a few points deducted for failing to present evidence for adequate provisions for the leaders (administrators) of this proposed plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points) | 15 | 12 |
| <p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant provides narrative as well as a visual representation of the organization of the Consortium governance structure that will be used to provide support and services to the 3 participating school districts. An excerpt from the Memorandum of Understanding is provided for support of the policy and infrastructure needed for this project. The plan described seems favorable and provides clarity for the organization and implementation of this proposed project.</p> <p>School leadership teams are clearly identified for each area as outlined in the plan (director, fiscal coordinator and specialist, portal developer, technology specialist, various academic coordinators/coaches, and family engagement specialist). The leadership teams are identified for the district and not specifically for the schools within the district.</p> <p>The organization and assigned leadership infrastructure is identified to assure that students are provided opportunities to progress and earn credit based on mastery and not time as well as multiple times are provided. The various leaders identified in each area are noted as being responsible for assuring learning resources and instructional practices are adaptable and assessable to all students including those with disabilities and ELL. Coordinators, specialist, coaches for various disciplines are cited as being responsible parties for implementation and follow through.</p> <p>The details provided for this criterion are clearly stated and comprehensive. The measures are reasonable and describe policies, practices, and rules that will support the implementation of this proposed project. The Applicant scores in the high range for this criterion with a few points deducted for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failing to demonstrate a plan for allowing students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, rather than the time spend on a topic 2. Failing to describe the leaders to be provided at specific schools. 3. Failing to provide clear evidence that demonstrates that this district has flexibility, process, and practices in place that will allow the district leadership teams to make decisions that may require flexibility to implement the plans. | | |

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| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant states that students and parents will have access to resources both in and out of the school. Beyond the school day access will be available at Community Learning Centers as part of the Out of School Project. Digital tools will be made available for check out so student can use them away from school. The use of password protected accounts will be provided to students, parents and educators to provide access to student data and information technology systems. As part of the proposed project plan, an online tutoring program that will provide allow monitoring of student progress and a Data Portal to support interoperable data systems will be provided. The proposed infrastructure will provide adequate access for students, parents, and educators.</p> <p>Many of the infrastructure (digital tools, ICPL data portal for interoperable data systems) requirements for this criterion are lacking at this time, but will be provided as part of this proposed plan. Because the Consortium lacks this infrastructure at this time and there will likely be a period of time at the beginning of this project where the infrastructure will not be provided a few points are deducted for this criterion.</p> | | |

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 13 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While an evaluation leadership team is clearly described as an integral part of the continuous improvement and monitoring plan, the Applicant notes that an outside evaluation consultant will be used to evaluate the implementation and to provide the summative evaluation of the proposed plan. Using an outside consultant enhances the validity of the evaluation process and may provide insightful information for the evaluation leadership team. The evaluation process is further supported by the use of sub-project 2 created data portal that will allow internal evaluation to also be made throughout the process.</p> <p>The continuous improvement process plan outlined has set meetings within each year and a detailed sequence of evaluations, both formative and summative included. While the plan is somewhat simplified, it is considered high-quality and realistic for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process to allow adequate monitoring, feedback, and corrections to assure the success of this project. For this criterion, the Applicant earns a high score. A few points are deducted for lack of clarification of the reporting process to the</p> | | |

public. While it is stated that the progress will be reported twice a year via a few venues, "sharing" is limited.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant narratives a plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The plan includes traditional methods or venues for communicating with parents (email, phone, direct mail, data portal, district/school webpages, parent teacher meetings, social media, etc.). The communication stops just short of places where "some" parents might be most likely to become engaged with the information. Timelines for monitoring to be sure that all parents have received the information and full comfortable in engaging in the implementation project is not clearly noted. Timelines for providing training to assure that all parents are comfortable with gaining access to the data portal is not stated as well as meeting the needs of parents who may not feel comfortable accessing data online via the data portal. Provisions are also not provided for parents or others with disabilities that may limit their ability to fully access information. The venues and limitations noted for ongoing communication is similar for students, community supporters, and partners.

The plan described is adequate yet fails short of high-quality plan given the vision for this proposed plan as one to "change the culture" does not include a clear plan for helping internal and external stakeholders to develop the mindset and skills needed to adequately engage with this paradigm shift. Clearly defined timeline and deliverables for engagement are not provided. For this reason a point is deducted for this criterion, yet the Applicant scores in the high range.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant states that the goals for this project will be monitored on comprehensively on an annual basis through the actual Highly Effective Teacher and Principal evaluation and various student performance measures as provided in the application.

For the PreK-3 grade band, data was not provided but will be determined as per the various measures identified in the application. Performance measures along with baseline data and target outcomes are provided and seem reasonable. Performance measures strongly align with the sub-project plans and the overarching project plan. Subgroups are clearly identified and provide a rationale for the performance measure addressed. In grades 4-8 performance measures go beyond academic measures to include positive relationships and managing behavior (social-emotional). While in grades 9-12, a very different yet critical performance measure is included: self-awareness (becoming socially and emotionally aware of ones feelings and distinguishing to determine true feelings). The traditional performance indicators for academic performance is greatly enhanced and supported by the additional social-emotional measures. The combination of academic and social-emotional measures provide strong support for the measures for career-readiness.

The variation between middle and high grade level bands with regard to the type of social-emotional performance measure "pairing" is ambitious and more likely to be achievable. The Applicant scores in the high range for this criterion with a point deducted for missing data fro Prek-3 levels.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provides a high-quality exceptional plan for evaluating the effectiveness of this plan. The leveled evaluation plan addresses evaluation across the project (overarching project all the way down to individual student level) and includes timelines with ongoing formative feedback and monitoring. While specific dates are not always provided for the timeline of evaluation, the interval is noted (annual report, in beta testing stage, annually in November) . Evaluation for investments are clearly noted within the application in developmental stages of the project as well as continuous improvement evaluation by internal and external reviewers.

The degree of this evaluation for the effectiveness of investments is of high quality and provides a rigorous plan based on the "best thinking at this point" (given that a paradigm shift is proposed with changing the culture) and earns full points for this criterion.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A comprehensive budget is provided with clear descriptions of all proposed funding expected to support this elaborate well organized

plan. Funding extends beyond the RTTT-D proposed plan and is stated. All budgeted spending is presented with exceptional clarity and organized by the 8 sub-projects included in the overall project proposal. For each sub-project a separate budget cost/expenditure is provided along with a narrative describing the details of that particular budget. Cost description and justification is provided within each budget with exceptional clarification and transparency. The applicant goes beyond and above in describing each line item with specific cost expected and variations to the cost for each given year of the project. Modified Direct Costs are also clearly noted with explanations for making such modifications.

One-time investments versus ongoing operational costs is clearly noted within each of the 8 sub-project budgets and again in the overall project budget. Because the goal of this project focuses on a complete reform effort for changing the culture of teaching and learning from teacher centered to student centered the sustainability of this project given the budget proposed is likely if this applicant is able to achieve the goal (of "changing the culture"). The beauty of this project is that the long-term sustainability cost is proposed to drastically decrease as the goal of changing the culture of teaching and learning is fully realized. Once the strategies for putting a new unique infrastructure for teaching and learning is in place and the culture shifts, maintaining the new paradigm will be fueled by the environment created. New teachers will begin emerged in the culture while veteran teachers will continue to learn from each other. Students, parents, community partnerships, and the local educational system will benefit from the personalized learning environment and this culture will become the standard for them further helping to support the sustainability of this proposed project.

The applicant provides a high quality budget plan that seems reasonable and sufficient for the proposed project plan with only one weakness noted. Travel expenses seem to be underestimated given the amount of travel that will be required for training and monitoring such a significant change in culture reform effort.

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

10

9

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The outlined proposed project is a high-quality plan (detailed and reasonable) with ambitious and achievable goals that if achieved can easily be sustained beyond the term of the grant. The funds allocated to support the professional development training, data portal, and the 8 subproject plans outlined within the application will be able to continue without additional funding if the culture of "change" is realized. Funds that may be saved from failed remediation type programs may be able to be used to support the limited costs associated with sustaining the project over time. Additionally, the success of the project will create awareness within the community for the future needs to continue the new "culture of change".

The applicant provides strong rationale and support that this project can be sustained over time after the term of this grant funding has ended. Full points are awarded for this criterion for the exceptional likelihood that this project is sustainable over time.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The competitive performance priority outlined is exceptional and most appropriate to fuel the proposed plan for it will address the highest need schools and students beyond the walls of the school helping to created a positive community-school environment. As noted in the application, school climate and students perception of the school environment is essential for learning to take place. The applicant furthermore provides a strong case for the connection between academic achievement and school climate to which much research supports this correlation. Partnering with the local organization Community in Schools of the Heart of Texas (CiSHT) seems like the perfect plan to provide extra assurance that the proposed plan will be successful. The outlined plan extends and funds the **current limited** services partnership/relationship with CiSHT which provides social, emotional, and healthcare to students and their families. The current partnership is limited in the number of students that can be served due to limited funds. By scaling up this partnership it will provide support for the overall proposed project by helping to ensure that all students and families in the three school districts are provided services especially those at the middle school level. The applicant explains the increased need at the middle school level which seems reasonable. The support of CiSHT further supports the priority of addressing personalized learning environments given that the focus of this additional support is on the individual student needs which includes their family. The total number of students to be served is noted in the proposal as well as desired results identified yearly.

The competitive preference priority plan is comprehensive and fully integrates with the overall proposed project plan. The integration is seamless with ambitious and yet achievable performance measures that are perfectly aligned and further supported by the original project plan performance measures.

They applicant proposes a very detailed, organized plan to integrate school and community services to support high need student

populations by increasing a current yet very limited established partnership that will provide a needed foundation for the overall proposed project plan. This proposed competitive preference priority provides exceptional support for the success of the overall project. The applicant earns full points for this exceptional and comprehensive plan to meet this criterion.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
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| Absolute Priority 1 | | Met |
| <p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Without a doubt this proposed plan comprehensively addresses Absolute Priority 1, the use of personalized learning environments by implementing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A culture of change - moving from teacher centered to student centered instruction 2. providing onine individualized student learning environments from within the school and outside of the school 3. after school community learning centers 4. implementing student online portfolios to help students monitor their own progress 5. engaging students through the use of digital STEM tools - connecting the real world with education 6. guiding students as they develop goals for college and career and provding experience in a career or job setting (personalized decision about their future with support) <p>And it builds upon the core educational areas in that the ultimate focus is to change the culture of teaching and learning from teacher centered to student centered creating personalized learning environments that will prepare students for college or career. The applicant proposes to make a paradigm shift by creating a positive school climate within the community by including students, parents, community partnerships that extends traditional learning beyond school by including social, emotional, and healthcare for high needs students and families. Teachers and administrators will be trained to implement a student-centered learning environment while extending the current partnership with CiSHT to help students and their families to address needs outside of the school setting that influences learning in school. With the shift to student centered, personalized learning environments students will learn to track their personal accomplishments and mastery of instructional standards. Students will be guided by teachers and their parents along with community partnerships to set realistics personal goals for their future. Online portfolios will be used to allow students to continously "see" their growth and achievement of their goals.</p> <p>This plan fully meets the guidelines for Absolute Priority 1 for the vision of this plan is focused on the student as an individual and helping them to set goals for their future while providing an online portfolio to track their progress. Ultimately, the applicant has proposed a strong plan and comprehensive plan for creating a positive school climate within the overall community and by making the paradigm shift from teacher centered to student centered aligned with clear goals and targets that are likely to increase student achievement, high school graduation rates, enrollment in college/university programs, and better prepare students for college and career..</p> | | |
| Total | 210 | 182 |