



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0044KS-2 for Galena USD 499

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The district's Project TRAIN (Transcending college Readiness for Adolescents by Integrating Networks) is built upon a wavier through the Kansas State Board of Education that granted an ESEA Flexibility wavier. The impetus of this wavier addressed four main goals as follows:

- Flexible delivery system
- Provide an effective educator in every classroom
- Ensure visionary leadership in each school
- Collaboration efforts with families, communities, constituent groups and policy partners

In accordance with the applicant, these are appropriate goals align and complement the four core educational assurance areas (e.g., Standards and Assessments, Data Systems, Effective Teachers and Principals, and Turn Around Strategies). The applicant provided detail information that listed and described essential district resources that will contribute to the programs implementation and success. The essential items that were addressed by the applicant provided emphasis in these respective areas:

- In-House and State supported data management systems
- Statewide recruitment and retention system (KEEB) supporting the acquisition of highly qualified personnel candidates
- Extensive staff development plans
- Annual comprehensive needs assessment focusing upon: curriculum, instruction, assessment, evaluation, and climate

b) It was apparent that the applicant articulated and justified a credible approach to goals that addressed student achievement, deepening the learning experience with students, and increasing equity through personalized learning. The vision of the project is to provide a comprehensive, systems change approach to increasing student achievement. The applicant indicated a convincing effort to increase personalized support for each student as its foundation of their proposal. It was evident that this vision was articulated and described in a comprehensive and coherent manner. The state's Career Fields and Clusters Model was referenced as a contributing effort to promote students focus on their academic interest areas. In the realm of personalized learning, the applicant identified supportive information that centered upon the focus areas of technology development and the encouragement to promote community-wide collaborative efforts and innovative partnerships toward ensuring support to implement the project successfully.

c) The classroom experience for students will be grounded in research-based practices that are centered upon the elements of engagement and motivation. The project is ambitious and provides an innovative design to expose students various competencies in areas of collaboration, decision-making, project planning and time-management, while applying its personalized learning systems. The proposal provided strong support that all students in the consortium will participate in personalized learning across all subject areas while engaging in lessons designed to address 21st century learning skills.

WEAKNESS:

The applicant didn't reference specifically or provided significant information to address the core educational area of **effective teachers and principals**, beyond listing the key features of a personalized learning system and through utilizing the KEEB recruitment and retention system.

In regards to what the classroom would be like for students participating in a personalized learning environments, the scenario conveyed an excellent descriptive account; however, relevant to a teacher's perspective the descriptive information was limited.

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

a) Districts independently contacted their local educational service center to inquire about applying for the grant. In order to meet the minimal enrollment requirements, a consortium was established with four districts to participate in the grant's application process.

b) The applicant identified and provided a list of all 20 participating schools within the four districts.

c) The applicant identified and provided raw data that reflected each school's demographics and breakdown in both actual numbers and percentages. The information listed by the applicant included the participating educators, total students, low-income students, and high-needs students.

In summary, as the entire student populations within all four participating districts includes all grade levels and students, the applicant's approach complied toward implementing its reform proposal while supporting a high-quality LEA and school-level plan.

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

The applicant's plan is designed to follow specific goals, objectives, activities, and include performance measures to ensure all requirements of the grant while addressing the specific needs of each district. The applicant provided a proposal that included a theory of change logic model, listed in a chart format, that included the following descriptive information in both a sequential and descriptive manner:

- Strategies
- Assumptions
- Influential Factors
- Problem or Issues
- Community Needs/Assets
- Desired Results

In addition, the applicant provided a description of two specific goals that were included in the proposal that included separate objectives and performance measures. The objectives were developed using a four pillar structure that scaffold upon each other. The proposal included a high-quality plan that was well detailed at each stage or level. Most notable in the plan, included the utilization of a state approved Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) that will ensure that the foundation (level or tier four) is firmly established. The inclusion of a comprehensive TRAIN activities chart, which included the various activities, timelines, deliverables and the responsible parties, was included by the applicant. In addition, similar charts that addressed both goals were also included by the applicant, which referenced the subgoals of the four identified and supportive pillars:

- **Pillar 1** Accreditation Model built upon relationships, relevance, responsive culture, rigor, and results
- **Pillar 2** Professional Leaders
- **Pillar 3** Professional Learning Communities
- **Pillar 4** MTSS

It was apparent that the project's Goal 2 would focus upon various professional development initiatives that will help to establish a qualified teaching staff who will be able to execute the program's extensive goals; Differentiated Instruction, Classroom Instruction that Works (CITW), Advanced Placement, College Readiness Programming, Literacy First, Technology Rich Classrooms, the Autism Training Program, and the Fusion Reading Program. In regards to meaningful reforms and quality instruction, those programs demonstrate a sound and reasonable effort toward meeting the district's ambitious goals to improve student learning outcomes.

In summary, the proposal clearly indicates a well-formed and highly-qualified plan that includes the scale up into a meaningful reform that will be supported district-wide as all district schools and students will participate in the plan. Evidence was described in the proposal that The Principal Leadership Academy will provide a forum for district

administrators to share information and ideas with other educators in the state's system; therefore, this forum (The Principal Leadership Academy) conveyed evidence toward the rendering of support that the plan will extend beyond the participating schools or districts. Also, the applicant identified the lowest-achieving school and described comprehensive activities and strategies, as indicated in their goals and within the plan, that will intend to bridge this achievement gap.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a sound plan that will result in improved student learning and performance while increasing equity among all participating schools and students. At the forefront of the proposal was an ambitious intent on behalf of the participants that a rigorous adherence to support systems change strategies would contribute to the proposal's achievable and challenging goals. The plan specified that the improvement on summative assessments, a need to decrease achievement gaps while increasing graduation rates, and ultimately increasing college enrollment would be the ultimate aim of the districts.

a) As evidence that the applicant will measure performance on summative assessments, information was presented that specified the state's transition to establishing a new assessment that will align with the Common Core Standards. The methodology to determine the percentage proficient status was described with details of how the Annual Measurable Objectives and Assessment Performance Index would be used in the scoring process. The proposal indicated that each building or school category has a specified rate; therefore, this extensive information will provided the proficiency status and growth of all the schools. The methodology for determining growth supported the project's ambitious goal through establishing a medium student growth score that meets or exceeds those of half the state schools. The proposal included performance charts and data that presented supportive evidence to the district's ability toward providing summative assessments for the purpose to focus upon performance strengths and weakness.

b) The district has defined an appropriate goal to decrease the achievement gap for those identified areas as defined (e.g., reading or language arts and math). In successfully executing this decrease, the district listed focus subgroups that will be targeted as indicated:

- All students
- Free/Reduced Lunch
- Disabilities
- White
- Hispanic
- ELL

The proposal provided a reasonable goal of reducing the non-proficient AMO while decreasing the percentage of non-proficient students in half by the 2017-2018 school year.

c) The applicant provided strong evidence, in a detailed chart format, that indicated an excellent graduation rate for each district. The proposed goal to increase the graduation rate was feasible and obtainable.

d) The applicant acknowledged that the consortium members currently don't track college enrollment data as required with RTTT; however, baseline data will be collected effectively upon receiving the grant.

WEAKNESS:

In the area of subgroups relevant to achievement gap indicators, the applicant didn't provide data on African-American students.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant provided little evidence that supported some modest gains in the area of improving student learning

outcomes and closing the achievement gaps; though the data, taken from their referenced areas indicated inconsistency and even a decline in student achievement indicators over the past four years.

The following list identifies the applicant's positive efforts toward actively pursuing alternative and innovative ways through partnerships that have added resources to the district:

- Funding for 21st Century Community Learning Center
- Partnership with CIS to establish Jobs for America's Graduates
- Funding for technology rich classrooms

It was evident that the applicant failed to identify documentation and evidence that clearly indicated an improvement in student learning outcomes, a closing of achievement gaps, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates, as indicated in the following areas that have shown increases in student achievement factors and test scores:

- Reading, Writing & Math Academic Achievement
- Improved Graduation Rates
- Placement of High-Quality Teachers
- PSAT & ACT

b) The applicant identified only one school as low achieving. The applicant didn't provide documentation and detailed information that supported their success in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in any of its schools.

c) The applicant identified PowerSchool as their student management system. The applicant didn't provide any evidence or details regarding their efforts to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in any manner. In addition, a data system designed to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services was not identified or provided details to describe such a process to communicate such information to stakeholders.

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

The applicant didn't provide details or evidence that indicated a high level of transparency in all areas of their LEA processes, practices, and investments.

a-c) As the applicant indicated, only one of the districts provides personnel salaries for all school level, instructional staff, and teachers to the state website.

The applicant didn't present or indicate any efforts to demonstrate transparency in conveying such salary information, on any personnel, to the public on a local level. The applicant clearly was non-compliant in areas of public openness and disclosure of financial aspects of the budget process, particularly salaries.

d) As the applicant indicated, only one of the districts provides non-personnel expenditures at the school level to the state website. Therefore, the applicant does not present any evidence or details where a high level of transparency is in existence in regards to this category.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium members, under Kansas Statute and through the Kansas Constitution, are provided flexibility in the design and delivery of instruction. As Kansas is a local control state, educators have the autonomy to determine the instructional methods necessary for students.

In this area that addresses state context for implementation, the applicant didn't provide and evidence or details that demonstrated specific examples where autonomy occurred or was exercised that impacted learning and student achievement.

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

a) The applicant provided little evidence of how stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, and principals) were engaged in the development of the proposal. The only document or information that indicated support from teachers was each district's

signed Application Assurances, which included the signature of the president of the local teacher union or association.

b) The applicant enclosed letters of support from mayors (3), PTO organizations (4), student government/organizations (4) and community colleges (2) in the consortium area. As noted from this list of supportive letter providers, the applicant didn't include representation from most of the districts' PTOs, civil rights and advocacy groups, civic organizations, community organizations, and noteworthy community leaders.

WEAKNESS:

The applicant didn't provide strong, supportive documentation to indicate an overwhelming amount of support from a consortium that includes four school districts and 20 schools. The proposal didn't include specific information that related to the organization and development of the plan. An account or description of public meetings, the formation and development of the plan, stakeholder (e.g., principal, teacher, parent, student and community) involvement and input was not presented in the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant referenced that central to the plan are the students. Support will be provided through service learning coordinators and career counselors/student advocates. Students will also have access to career software that will provide career development knowledge for students. Educators will be provided access to individuals' career portfolios and their assessment results.

The applicant addressed and described that increasing opportunities to strengthen dual-credit offerings with access to higher level subjects via interactive distance. The applicant intends to increase Advanced Placement offerings and professional development for teachers in this area. The applicant provided evidence and support toward the implementation of dual-credit offerings by allocating and supporting funding for students.

In support of ensuring deep learning experiences for students, the applicant has committed to an innovative internship program that will contribute toward increasing students' knowledge of workplace skills while receiving job experience.

In regards to promoting access and exposure to diverse cultural experiences, the applicant indicated that a partnership with the local state's Regents University. The program will help expose those participants to engage with international students.

A reference was made toward the Student Leadership Academy that is designed and described to build interest in science, math, and technology.

The applicant provided evidence toward critical academic content and skill development in traits such as teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving through the use of a college readiness programming. In regards to this utilization of the college readiness programming impacting traits such as teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, there were no specific details on these two correlations that would result in such anticipated outcomes.

b) The applicant specified that the plan will provide all teachers access to the tools, knowledge, and resources to create more intensive and personalized learning opportunities. Through the utilization of service learning coordinators, who will be located in each building, the applicant provided details that teachers and students will be provided qualified, supportive personnel to ensure the plan's effectiveness and success.

In order to ensure achievable outcomes, the state's board of education has implemented an Individual Career Plans of Study for all 8th grade students, which will focus upon career exploration information and opportunities.

The applicant provided evidence that specifies the significance or technology toward supporting personalized learning plans. An ambitious commitment to infuse technology throughout all curriculum areas was described and emphasized. In support of this intent to effectively use technology, the utilization of technology facilitators/instructional coaches was noted. As an innovative factor, the learn by exploration classroom dynamics approach to ensure a student-centered technology classroom environment provided strong evidence toward promoting a personalized learning approach to the academic growth of each child.

Through the support of local community colleges and access to AP coursework, students will be provided access to challenging classes in such subject areas as physics, chemistry, Spanish and Arabic. Evidence to promote these high level

offerings was indicated through the delivery and access of online courses in these programs/areas. The applicant provided convincing support of parental involvement by indicating the utilization of career counselors and student advocates.

To successfully execute personalized learning plans, students will be monitored quarterly with annual updates; however, the method to evaluate and the parties involved weren't verified. The applicant provided a reference that the special needs student would be provided special accommodations, support, interpreters, technology resources, and additional para support in order to be college-career ready through the personalized learning plan.

WEAKNESS:

The applicant provided limited information that described exposures to cultural experience for students beyond the reference to Regents University. In addition, there was no evidence of documentation from Regents University regarding a partnership agreement or commitment to this plan. The applicant didn't provide evidence or details toward addressing the entire student population to cultural experiences, awareness, and growth. Also, limited exposure to ensuring rigorous course and instruction to all students was not adequately addressed or provided.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant indicated that each participant will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of areas to improve student achievement and increase their professional growth. It was noted that funding has been appropriately allocated to support this professional development initiative. The applicant described the design of Professional Learning Communities and emphasized that all educators will be committed toward supporting effective implementation of personalized learning plans for each student's specific needs.

In regards to the adaption of content and instruction, the applicant stated that the district needs assessment (DNA) will be applied to determine and justify the need to adapt content and instruction.

The applicant provided specific information that addressed frequently assessing student progress.

b) In this area that addressed the accessibility that educators will have and their knowledge to appropriately utilize the data and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career readiness, the applicant provided references to the following noted areas: transitioning to personalized learning environments, implementation of MTSS and Professional Learning Communities, core curriculum alignment, digital resources, and adequate resources.

c) The applicant indicated and described that the MTSS and Professional Leadership Communities will provide school leaders with access to the tools necessary to structure effective learning environments. In assessing school progress the state's system of Assessment Performance Indicator's will ensure progress and achievement made in closing the achievement gaps; therefore, this will provide supportive evidence toward achieving progress with the plan.

d) As indicated and described, teachers and principals will be continually assessed through the evaluation system to determine the number of students impacted by effective and highly-effective teachers.

WEAKNESS:

In regards to teacher and principal effectiveness and assessment, the applicant lacked an innovative or improved method as they indicated that they will continue to maintain and use their present evaluation system. There was insufficient evidence that indicated the applicants intent to improve upon the number of effective and highly-effective teachers

The applicant didn't identify high-quality learning resources (e.g., instructional content and assessments), including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and the tools to create and share new resources.

The applicant didn't present detailed evidence that a high-quality plan will be established to ensure an increase in the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly-effective teachers and principals, including any references to hard to staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
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(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a) The applicant identified the organizational plan/structure of the consortium that featured the lead district. The plan listed the key personnel positions, which each have specific duties and functions that relate to the implementation, development, and objectives that align with the project. In addition, an organizational chart was included in the proposal that rendered clarity to the plan's governance.
- b) The applicant identified the development, responsibilities, and purpose of school leadership teams as they are intended to ensure autonomy. Though the project includes a consortium, each participating LEA will retain autonomy that provides local control over all related matters as indicated. A project advisory board will be established that is intended to ensure equity among the consortium members.
- c) The applicant identified their past awarding of credit based on traditional means of course completion satisfaction. The districts will evaluate individual projects and consider one's mastery of skills and depth of knowledge when issuing credits.
- d) The applicant described that various teaching strategies will be utilized to allow students opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards.
- e) The applicant indicated that learning resources have been provided through Title I funding, which also apply to ELL and students with disabilities. The applicant identified that they will work with the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network in coordinating support for all students for improved outcomes. In summary, the applicant provided adequate learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible while meeting the needs of students with disabilities and ELL.

WEAKNESS:

In review of organizing the establishment of leadership teams, the applicant didn't define and identify the membership structure of these teams. In addition, specific information wasn't conveyed that clearly defined the decision making process and staffing model that will be utilized to ensure the successful governance of the plan. The roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators weren't addressed or described. Also, the applicant's list of key personnel provided a brief description of the position; however, the qualifications and specific job descriptions of these positions weren't identified.

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

- a) The applicant didn't successfully document that various strategies will be employed to address this area to ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. In an effort to provide access to technology beyond the school, the applicant plans to pursue the establishment of partnerships with public libraries, community centers, local businesses and others to provide internet access, computers, and other technologies to ensure equal access to all students. Also, the applicant stated that funding will be utilized to provide wireless access through cell phone providers to the extent possible; on a case to case basis.
 - b) The applicant stated that each district will devise their own plan to ensure technical support, but supportive information to ensure this aspect of the plan wasn't provided. In the school setting, it was described that career counselors/student advocates and technology facilitators will work with students and families. Teachers will be provided professional development training to enhance their technology skills within the classroom. In summary, the applicant lacked the development of a comprehensive plan and infrastructure to implement technological support to all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and educators) as identified within the plan.
 - c) The applicant identified that all consortium members utilize PowerSchool to provide teachers, parents, and students access to various data. The PowerSchool also provides the option to download data into an XML (Extensible Markup Language) format; that allows the use of other projects such as Alleyoop.
 - d) As referenced, each member district participates in the state Master Data Management initiative, KIDS (Kansas Individual Data on Students) collection system.
- In separate cases, these districts have utilized other programs (e.g., MACS (Management Advisory Computer Systems), Harris School Solutions, and TalentEd Perform).

WEAKNESS:

In regards to LEA policy and infrastructure, it didn't appear that a high-quality was developed. As an example, the applicant

lacked evidence and documentation that a plan was yet developed that ensured the partnership with public libraries, community centers, local businesses and others to provide internet access, computers, and other technologies to ensure equal access to all students. In addition, the names and location of these institutions and businesses weren't provided; therefore, this lack of supportive information and commitment from these groups negates a positive impact and the feasibility of this aspect of the plan.

The applicant also referenced their effort to pursue funding for students to provide wireless access through cell phone providers to the extent possible; on a case to case basis. The plan didn't provide details or a description how such a resource (cell phone) could be utilized to support the plan's goals while maintaining equity with all students.

In the area of ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies (e.g., peer support, online support, or local support) each district in the consortium has yet to develop such a plan as indicated by the lack of evidence provided.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The lead district has stated that they will contract with an external evaluator to access formal data analysis and interpretations of the plan. The progress toward goals in fidelity of implementation, proficiency of practice, and student achievement will be measured by each building within the consortium. As an outcome of these evaluations and efforts, an annual review that correlates practice improvements with student learning will contribute to the effectiveness of technology and professional development within the project.</p> <p>In the development of its plan, its design will include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Though data will be collected and assessed, the need to make corrections and improvements while maintaining focus on the program's primarily goals in making continuous improvement wasn't adequately addressed or explained. The applicant lacked the development of a high-quality plan that would ensure its success.</p> <p>WEAKNESS:</p> <p>In regards to formal data analysis, evaluation updates, quarterly/annual reports, and the final evaluation report, the applicant didn't clarify or identify their method to how they intend to make these assessments and information available to the publicly.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Though the applicant described the importance of community engagement, understanding successful system changes relevant to staff development, and the need to apply a variety of approaches that contributes to a well informed and supportive public; the applicant lacked the development of a high-quality plan to implement successfully ongoing communication and engagement.</p> <p>Weakness:</p> <p>In an effort to address the area of ongoing communication and engagement, the applicant didn't identify those individuals/positions responsible in maintaining effective communication with all stakeholders. Though a reference was made to key internal and external stakeholders, this information was vague and non-specific as to specifically who would be represented in these groups. Also, the reference to holding regular stakeholder meetings was vague and non-specific regarding the timeframe and location of these sessions. It was conveyed that information would be shared through PTOs, school-wide events, and through other communication vehicles; again this information was vague and non-specific as it didn't indicate those schools that have PTOs and schools that may not have such organizations. In school-wide events, the method of conveying such information and describing which events would be targeted was lacking.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant was able to describe and identify ambitious goals, yet their achievable performance measures were vague. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant did provide specific information that described within the four stated areas well stated performance measures and objectives. This information included selection rationale, rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. As described by the applicant the selection process was age-specific that targeted both academic and non-cognitive indicators; continuous improvement efforts through information provided by an external evaluator; and the utilization to use the proposed measurement tool to ensure effectiveness and possible need to make changes. The plan lacked the requirements and methods that related to the position, external evaluator.

As identified by the applicant, baseline information wasn't indicated in the following areas:

Grades 4-8 College and Career Readiness

Grades 9-12 College and Career Readiness

Grades 9-12 Participating students completing FAFSA form

In summary, the applicant provided vague goals and evidence that would relate to its efforts to ensure continuous improvement through a well-defined performance measures as indicated.

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

The applicant stated that the proposal is a comprehensive program with a variety of strategies related to data systems and technology, human capital, student need-based instruction, classroom instructional design, and non-academic supports. The applicant stated that the external evaluator will help develop a timeline for evaluation of key investments will be accomplished within the project's first few months; therefore, a planned schedule to evaluate the project hasn't been developed.

A reference to technology purchases and consideration was included that mention of infrastructure, wireless capabilities, computers, shop equipment, tablets, and financial accounting software; though the connection of these acquisitions and the evaluation of the plan's effectiveness was unclear.

WEAKNESS:

The applicant didn't provide supportive information that described a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the plan's effectiveness. Also, professional development and related training activities that employed technology were not evident. The applicant didn't provide any concrete description that would enable how any adjustments and revisions during the plan's implementation would be addressed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicated that all requested funding is related to building a district-wide systems change and to increase the capacity of each participating consortium member's district. The applicant provided detailed budget information, both in a narrative and budget table format, that fully supported their projected expenditures of the project. It was duly noted that detailed budget information was included separately for all four participating districts. Information pertinent to the grant's sustainability, which identified external sources of funding beyond the RTTT monies, was listed and described.

The allocations associated with each budget category appeared reasonable and sufficient in supporting the project's development and implementation.

The applicant provided a clear description of the purpose of each budget category's allocation which indicated its purpose relevant to the grant and needs of that expenditure relevant to the project.

The applicant clearly identified and described the funds that will be used for on-time investments and those costs or

expenditures that have been established to support the ongoing operational costs throughout the entire grant period. In conveying budget information, the applicant described funding strategies to ensure long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments that will be created throughout the grant period.

WEAKNESS:

In regards to reasonable and sufficient support of the project's development and implementation, the applicant referenced their need to ensure transparency with all stakeholders, especially parents, yet no specific information, description, or details were provided to execute this communication effort or intent.

The applicant identified funding sources beyond the grant (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Communities In Schools, and private foundations); however, there were no forms of agreements or documentation from these sources that reinforced such a commitment to sustain such support.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It wasn't clearly apparent that the applicant has developed a high-quality plan for sustainability of its goals beyond the term of the grant. The applicant didn't provide any supportive documentation or made any reference to existing documentation that would help to demonstrate their success in meeting the criterion of this area.

The applicant made mention of the importance to strengthen and maintain partnerships with the local community colleges, local regents university, and with members of the community; however, the documentation within the application didn't adequately support this goal as letters of support from such partnerships were limited, and content within these letters were non-specific to the timeframe that extended beyond the term of the grant.

The applicant did specify the importance of partnerships and communication, but a comprehensive plan to bridge these intended goals was not evident.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

No information was provided

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant met the standards of the criterion of this absolute priority as indicated. As indicated, the applicant addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	143
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0044KS-3 for Galena USD 499

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1)(a) The applicant has a strong and clear plan for meeting all the RTT/D required educational assurance areas. The consortium of districts in Project TRAIN (Transcending college Readiness for Adolescents by Integrating Networks) will at the same time address the state's ESEA flexibility waiver by providing a flexible delivery system to meet students' changing needs, provide an effective teacher in every classroom and visionary leaders in every school, and collaborate with families, community groups and policy partners. Teachers are receiving comprehensive training in the implementation of the Common Core ELA and Math standards (and the expectations of the Smarter Balanced Assessments) as well transitioning to the NextGen Science and Fine Arts standards and the state's standards and assessments in Social Studies. The section does not provide information regarding how it will recruit, reward, and retain effective/highly effective principals.

The applicant is using PowerSchool and the state's KIDS Collection System is appropriate for managing comprehensive student data; the use of new AMOs (Annual Measurable Objectives), measured through APIs (an Assessment Performance Index), rewards districts for student growth at all levels. To recruit, develop, reward and retain effective educators is a challenge in such a rural area, and the LEAs in TRAIN utilize the state's KEEB system of technology and services to help them. Those resources include eMentoring through eMSS for regular education teachers and Explorations services for mentoring special education teachers; it is not clear how and why these two strands are different rather than integrated. Teachers will receive stipends for much of their leadership and professional development work.

One of the elementary schools in the TRAIN consortium is identified as a Focus school, with a large achievement gap between the state's benchmark and its lowest performing students. This school and others in TRAIN will benefit from the state's Technical Assistance System Network that provides workshops and consultation services. The RTT/D project sensibly builds on all these aforementioned core educational assurance areas.

(A)(1)(b) The applicant presents a credible constellation of approaches to provide a comprehensive, systems change approach for accelerating student learning/achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing personalization of plans and supports for students intending to pursue jobs/careers right after high school; there is a need for more information concerning how the applicant's districts will respond to the needs of those going on to (or have the potential to go on to) post-secondary college/university. The LEAs will utilize the state's Career Fields and Clusters Model, the Multi-Tier System of Supports RTI interventions, the High Schools That Work model (or one similar), and personalized learning plans to combine high academic expectations with relevant career-oriented, project-based technical experiences. The challenge will be to decide which of these models will be the focus and connector for all the other related initiatives involved in the RTT/D project.

(A)(1)(c) This section promotes a classroom experience based on Hanover research for personalized

learning best practices in middle schools, though easily and reasonably applied to the high school level; the case study of an imaginary student is compelling. There is a need for more applicant-provided information how its RTT/D project will address high school students whose needs and interests are academic rather than just in the preparation for a career. That is, the responses to section A(1) are particularly centered on students interested in technical courses and work-based learning options and does not seem to include those who need to be prepared for acceptance and future success at more academic colleges and universities. There is also the need for more information about what the classroom experience will actually be like for teachers participating in the RTT/D projects.

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

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7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)(a) The applicant describes the process whereby four interested districts came together to obtain grant-writing services to complete a proposal for potential RTT/D funding. It does not include the required information as to how those participating districts have or will actually select participating schools within their districts.

(A)(2)(b) This section notes the names of the four unified school districts participating in the consortium, but does not list the schools that will be participating in the RTT/D-funded projects [however, they are listed in the following section of the application, A/2/c]. There is an additional concern that although three of the participating district are located in the extreme southeastern section of the state, the fourth (USD 363 Holcomb) is located hundreds of miles away in the southwestern part of the state. This could make shared professional development and other collaborative components of the project somewhat problematic, at least for the educators and students in Holcomb.

(A)(2)(c) A list of the participating schools in each of the participating districts is included; the schools include PK, elementary, middle and high schools. This is somewhat confusing as the narrative in the previous sections appears to stress interventions, supports, and programs primarily at the high school level. All the required school demographic information is included in an accompanying chart.

These rural schools are mostly small to mid-size; for instance, the four high schools have a total of 249, 293, 529, and 799 students respectively, with the percentage of students from low-income families ranging from 41.94% to 83.08%. However, despite these ranges, it is curious to note that all the students in each school are shown as "high need students" (e.g., the numbers are the same in columns 'B' and 'C').

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

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6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The response to the (A)(3) section's requirements includes a quote from the state's ESEA flexibility waiver and states that the consortium will align its RTT/D initiatives to the waiver's theories and research but does not describe its own logic model/ theory of change other than stating that long-lasting, sustainable change must come from the top down, thus denying the importance of stakeholder involvement and ownership in any school reform efforts.

It is not clear how the applicant's Project TRAIN alignment with its state 5R accreditation model (stressing relationships, relevance, responsive culture, and results) which actually "look like" when adopted in the four districts' schools. In addition, these are goals now required by the applicant's state accreditation process rather than the districts' plan for its own RTT/D meaningful and visionary reform activities -- that is, districts will need to attend to these goals with or without RTT/D support.

The second pillar for Goal 1 involves ensuring the districts will have higher quality leaders. Districts can send potential leaders to a year-long series of professional development activities called Leadership Academy and principals will participate in a similar Principal Leadership Academy. There is a lack of information about how the potential leaders will be selected, how many will participate,

where it will take place (a potential problem for the Holcomb educators since their schools are hundreds of miles away from the other three districts), or who the presenters will be. An additional concern is that it appears the topics for these academies are more management-related than focused on changes that will thoughtfully and positively improve student learning outcomes. For instance, the academies' topics include crisis management, communication skills, and political and legal issues, and developing plans for (unspecified) personal and professional development, all quite removed from improving instruction or the accessibility of rigorous curriculum.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be established, again a worthy goal in itself, but one in this case that seems to lack a cited research base (which is easily available through the work of the DuFours and others), and describes administrators and teachers working together in PLCs. Without specific goals or protocols, the applicant assumes that PLC meetings in themselves will increase the effectiveness of teachers and administrators; this is a faulty assumption that needs further clarification and a much stronger referenced knowledge-base (again, this is easily available).

It is also confusing that the applicant notes [in the chart for Pillar 3] that each LEA will identify just "a" (one) PLC team, rather than establishing grade level and vertical teams that together involve all teachers, and that there will be a summer and then quarterly retreats for all PLC members. If the various PLC teams were to include all teachers, as would normally be expected, then the retreats would be for over 825 consortium educators. It is also troubling that the only deliverable from such retreats would only be an agenda rather than actions that would improve student learning.

The applicant describes an Response to Intervention-like state-approved Multi-Tier Systems of Supports (MTSS) used by low performing districts in the states with federal School Improvement Grants. Again, these supports could be a very helpful model for the applicant districts, but it is not clear why RTT/D funds would be needed to implement the MTSS goals as listed.

In this section the applicant also describes eight different professional development models and programs to improve instruction that consortium educators will have the opportunity to learn about. Each of these is worthy of in-depth training, but there is no indication as to how many educators will be involved in each one, or how they are connected as part of the applicant's overall plan for improving student learning outcomes. For instance, to be implemented with fidelity, Differentiated Instruction or Classroom Instruction That Works each would require extensive school-wide professional development, coaching, mentoring, and skilled supervision. Likewise, preparing teachers to offer Advanced Placement courses, to integrate technology rich classrooms, to accelerate reading achievement through Literacy First and/or the Fusion Reading Program, or, finally, to implement the Autism Training Program would each require a major commitment of time and focus in each of the schools within the four participating LEAs. It is difficult to see how they could possibly be implemented simultaneously and meaningfully with any degree of quality and fidelity in ways that would have a positive, coordinated, school and district-wide impact on student learning.

Lastly, the deliverables for Professional Development Opportunities as listed in the chart for Goal 2, do not reflect what new skills educators will actually learn and be able to apply, but rather only relate to very low level outcomes such as schedules for trainings, attendance rosters, and certifications of completion.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 It is commendable that the consortium's districts are expecting to implement the Multi-Tier Systems of Support, Professional Learning Communities, and the anticipated 5R accreditation model. However, there is a need for clarity about the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the PLCs, the 'collaborative teams' and the 'building leadership teams.' The Self-Correcting Feedback Loop appears to be a requirement of the state's Department of Education rather than an integral component of the applicant's RTT/D plan.

The applicant states that its proposal will address (A)(4)(a) through (d) with goals for improving performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment. However the information is not provided by student subgroup (other than by school) for each participating LEA for its response to (A)(4)(a) and there is no information provided to explain or justify the variation in expected growth between and among the members' schools.

School climate activities lack any kind of proactive prevention measures but instead focus on basic school safety, including measures such as installing security cameras and magnetic locks -- and the deliverables for these are noted as an unspecified intervention list and activity logs -- rather than any positive indicators of an improved school climate for learning. Parent meetings appear to be held 'each year,' with Agendas as the only deliverable. The stated deliverables for the planned Student Leadership Academy and Internships for high school students [in the Goal 4 chart] are extremely limited with only participation rosters of students and partnering agencies noted, rather than any reference or stated connection with improved student learning and performance.

(A)(4)(a) It is a challenge to decide if the applicant's annual goals are ambitious yet achievable since the expected growth from 2011-12 to 2017-18 varies widely from school to school. For instance in these six years, all students at Westside Elementary School are expected to jump from 546 to 635 [+ 89 points] in their Reading Assessment Performance Index, while on the same assessment, in the same time span, all students at the same district's Pittsburg Middle School are only expected to increase from 696 to 703 [+ 7 points]. This variance is evident in Reading and Math for all students at all schools within the four participating districts. Also, the subgroups indicated for (a) are listed as each school rather than subgroups within each school or district.

(A)(4)(b) It is not clear what is meant by the subgroup described as 'multi-racial,' since many students classified as African-Americans may also fit that category. Each district has the probably ambitious yet achievable annual goal of decreasing by about half its achievement gaps from 2011-12 to 2017-18 in Reading and Math for all students and in each subgroup of students.

(A)(4)(c) The increase in graduation rates for all students within each district/county LEA appears to be reasonable, but it is not evident how subgroups within these districts are faring regarding their graduation rates. The rates portrayed, as of 2011-12, are already fairly high, varying from 84.7 in Galena to 91.1 in Holcomb; by 2017-18, the graduation rate in each district is projected to vary from a low of 92.7 in Galena to a high of 95.9 in Holcomb.

(A)(4)(d) There is no information provided for this sub-section as district consortium districts do not presently track college enrollment; they intend to start doing so when awarded an RTT/D grant.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)(a) There is a lack of clear evidence for a record of success in the past four years across the participating districts, although there are isolated examples across the four districts of initiatives started in 2012 - 2013, including a Jobs for America's Graduates (JAGs), various 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school programs, and one Secure our Schools project. There is no information about the specific goals of these programs or (since they are quite new) their potential impact on student learning outcomes, closing achievement gaps, high school graduation rates, &/or college enrollment. The goals noted are vague and non-specific, e.g., Labette County's Secure our Schools project's goal is described as improving student safety and security on all campuses, but

there is no information on what student or school needs were being addressed with this initiative, what the funds were used for, and how it would improve student learning.

(B)(1)(b) There is one of the state's lowest performing schools in one of the participating districts (Meadowlark Elementary); however, there is no evidence of any record of success in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in this school. There is also a lack of evidence regarding the areas of low performance by Meadowlark student sub-groups or how any specific intervention and supports may have contributed to students improving or changing their achievement over the past four years.

(B)(1)(c) Currently PowerSchool is utilized in all the consortium's districts. However, this subsection describes the present and future use of this data management system, noting that students, educators, and parents "will have" access to student performance data in ways that inform and improve their participation. There is no indication that making student performance data available to stakeholders has improved participation, instruction, and services. That is, the applicant suggests that if and when all stakeholders, especially parents, have access to student performance data, then they will "have a clear understanding to make informed decisions regarding individual student achievement." It is a significant and unjustified leap to posit that having access to such information automatically leads to parents understanding the data and its meaning/context and an instant ability to make more informed decisions (and take more helpful actions) regarding their children's progress and achievement in school.

Overall, the Project TRAIN Student Learning and Achievement chart shows a very uneven record of student achievement progress. In some cases there was modest improvement from 2008-09 to 2011-12 in Labette County, but in other cases student achievement actually declined. For instance, in the Galena district, the percentage of students proficient in Reading fell from 82.8% to 81.1% and in Math from 81.1% to 79.9%, with similar declines in the Pittsburg district. High school graduation rates in the Pittsburgh district fell from 98.8% in 2008-2009 to 78.4% in 2011-12, and similarly in the Holcomb district the same rate fell from 94.5% to 82.3%. The percentage of core classes taught by highly qualified teachers increased in three districts and fell in the fourth (Galena). From 2009-10 to 2012-13, the number of students taking the PSAT in Labette County declined from 45 to 18 and the number of ACT test takers declined from 97 to 86. In those three years, the average ACT scores in the four districts declined slightly in two districts and increased slightly in two districts; in Galena the average ACT score increased from 19.2 to 19.8 and in Labette it increased from 20.8 to 21.4.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 As required by state law, each of the participating districts publishes an annual budget that details expenditures for K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. Three of the four districts do not currently provide school level personnel salaries or non-personnel expenditures, although they agree to do so via their websites or other means. The fourth district, Pittsburgh, currently does provide such information through the state's websites. Overall, the applicant consortium lacks a consistent level of demonstrated evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments other than publishing annual budgets.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 All four of the consortium districts have sufficient autonomy under the state's laws and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments. They are located in a local control state and all districts have the autonomy to establish policies, procedures, and practices that impact learning environments as they see fit to do so.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)(a) The applicant notes that each district member of the Project TRAIN consortium discussed the RTT/D application with stakeholders including boards of education, principals, teachers, and labor union representatives. However, there is no mention as to whether students, families, teachers, and principals in the participating schools were involved in the development and, if suggested or needed, the revision of the RTT/D proposal. For instance, there is no indication that stakeholders helped craft the MOUs or that students and families were invited to or participated in presentations/discussions regarding the RTT/D application, nor is there any documentation indicating that there were any revisions made based on discussions with boards of education, principals, teachers, &/or labor union representatives.

(B)(4)(b) Letters of support are included from the state's Commissioner of Education, three mayors, and numerous parents, student councils and other student groups, and PTO representatives. The number of letters is commendable. However, it is not clear that the signers actually knew and understood the goals and activities of the RTT/D project since the text of the letters from those within each stakeholder group are remarkably similar to others in that group. There is also a lack of support letters from local civic and community-based organizations.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)(a)(i) & (ii): High needs students are not identified by subgroup as all the students in all the consortium's four districts are considered participants in the RTT/D project; this information is provided in the School Demographic Chart in section (A)(2), column G that lists 100% of participating students in each school, and columns C, E, and F -- where the number of participating high needs students in each school is the same as the total # of low income students, that is also equal to the total # of students in each school. Thus the applicant intends that all students in each school will benefit from RTT/D-funded career education support such as the appointment of new Service Learning Coordinators and Career Counselor positions. There is the need for more information regarding how students (especially elementary students, who are not yet involved with service learning or internships) will understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals -- and how parents will be involved in supporting their children in this endeavor.

Also, it is not clear that students would identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college standards or be able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. Instead, the emphasis appears to be on career discovery and investigations. For instance, students, beginning in grade 6, will have access to the state's Career Pipeline software that supports career development and technical education programs and initiatives. RTT/D funding will also support students involved with worksite experiences and workplace internships based on their career cluster/pathway. There is no information provided in these responses as to how students' progress towards their goals will be measured.

(C)(1)(a)(iii) With RTT/D funding, participating districts will have opportunities to strengthen their dual credit offerings with local colleges and universities (there is no information regarding how many students in each district presently are involved with dual credit courses), expand interactive distance learning for courses in areas such as foreign languages and physics, and expand Advanced Placement offerings. However, the actual emphasis appears to be on career ready graduation and expanding students' preparation for post-high school local jobs rather than increasing deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest that might lead to increased percentages of students

motivated and prepared to go on to college or university. Where there is attention to college readiness, the data provided reflects a limited number of students involved in such options. For instance, in 2012-2013, across all four districts this section notes that 79 juniors and seniors participated in PSAT exams; however in the College Readiness Test Participation and Mean Scores chart in (B)(1), only 41 PSAT test takers are noted for the same year, including only three in the Galena district and none in the Holcomb district. Also, the districts vary considerably in their present offerings of Advanced Placement (AP) courses (and there is no information provided concerning non-AP Honors courses). That is, Holcomb and Galena districts do not offer any AP courses, Labette County offers two, while Pittsburgh offers seven. In 2012-13, 72 students across the consortium participated in 105 AP exams with less than half (35) receiving a score of 3 or better; there is no information provided concerning which schools and which exams generated the scores of three or better.

(C)(1)(a)(iv) Students from the participating districts will be allowed (rather than encouraged) to participate in the local state Regents University's events that could expose students to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. There is no evidence regarding how many students presently attend such events through school-sponsored field trips, nor is there information regarding the distance between the rather isolated Holcomb schools and Regents University. Further, there is a lack of information about participating schools hosting foreign exchange students or inviting students from other parts of the country and the world to come and present at the participating schools.

Middle school students will have the opportunity to participate in an off-site Student Leadership Academy (SLA), although it is not clear how many students such academies can accommodate; only two students would be selected to present at the National Scratch Technology Conference. The Budget in (F)(1) notes that each of the four LEAs will send six middle school students in these SLAs for a total of 24 students out of over 1,100 middle school students in the consortium, so it is difficult to ascertain the impact of the SLAs on the entire middle school population. The academies will be designed to teach students advanced skills in science, math, technology, and social leadership through emerging technologies. These are worthy topic areas; however, it appears that since the academies will be very limited in the percentage of middle school students participating, it is not evident that it would increase the access and exposure of all students in those grades (especially those with high needs) to such advanced learning opportunities.

(C)(1)(a)(v) The applicant intends to expand the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) program, presently in place in two of the four high schools, to the other two districts' high schools and also use RTT/D funding to implement the S3 strategies in all the districts' schools (K-12). The S3 goals and topics are worthy and important, but it is not clear how exactly this expansion would occur or how the S3 activities would help all students master critical academic content and develop skills in areas such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem solving. Also, many of the S3 topics are broad (e.g., learning supports, wellness, academically engaging culture, school professional communities, family and community supports, etc.) and each one is likely to require extended planning, professional development, and clear and measurable outcomes before any one of them, much less all of them, could be implemented with fidelity and high impact.

(C)(1)(b)(i) The applicant intends to focus on project-based learning as the way to provide all students with access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development. Kindergarten through 7th grade teachers will be supported with RTT/D-funded, school-based service learning coordinators who will provide the teachers with the tools, knowledge, and resources for creating more intensive and personalized opportunities for students. It is not clear what specific K-7 project-based learning model will be implemented, or what specific training, tools and resources will be provided. Students in 8th-12th grades may be involved with Personal Plans of Study (PPS); the applicant states that its state is expanding its expectation for schools to implement PPS by including it as part of its revised accreditation system; there is no date provided for when this revised system will be in place. Also, the Appendix includes the state's PPS five column rubric that provides a way for

districts to assess their progress in implementation but the applicant's response does not include a plan for transitioning to the PPS system or a time-line for doing so.

(C)(1)(b)(ii) To meet the requirement of providing a variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments, the applicant's districts will largely rely on Technology Facilitators/ Instructional Coaches and a significant investment in expanding wireless connections, bandwidth, software, multimedia, and individual computer or tablet access for students, along with intensive professional development for teachers. It makes sense for these facilitators to work closely with teachers, providing technical support, cooperative lesson planning and teaching, modeling lessons and providing feedback to teachers as well as organizing at least six days of customized instruction for each teacher in how to integrate technologies into high quality instruction. RTT/D funds will also be used to develop and enhance career pathways for students, including the purchase of necessary supplies, equipment, curriculum, and human resources. The Holcomb district will also initiate a mentorship program to offer support and training for new and early career teachers. The applicant also refers to the 'unique cultural and ethnic background' of Holcomb students, but does not specify what that uniqueness actually entails, or what specific needs and relevant interventions/supports are to be implemented to effectively address these (unspecified) unique characteristics.

(C)(1)(b)(iii) The applicant intends to strengthen and expand distance-learning opportunities so that students can take courses not offered in their local high schools. There is no information provided regarding how many students are presently taking advantage of such opportunities, or the chance to take advanced courses at their local community colleges, nor is there information about the alignment of such courses with college/career standards and/or graduation requirements.

(C)(1)(b)(iv)(a) & (b) and (c) Career counselors/student advocates will work with parents, teachers, principals, and counselors to assess student data; it is not specified as to whether or not they will work directly with, and provide ongoing and regular feedback, to students themselves (a significant omission). Special Education students are the only ones identified in this sub-section as having high needs and thus requiring accommodations and high quality strategies in order to be on track toward meeting college/career ready standards and graduation requirements. There is a one-sentence reference to additional supports for students identified as high need through the MTSS model, but there is a lack of information about what this would actually 'look like' for students in the districts' schools. It is also not clear if the utilization of PowerSchool and possible (unspecified) technical support and trainings during parent nights will provide useful mechanisms to students for ensuring that they will understand how to use various RTT/D-funded tools and resources in order to track and manage their own learning.

In summary, the (C)(1) responses include worthy components; however, these do not include the elements of a high quality plan. That is, there is a lack of specific information regarding time-lines, deliverables, and activities, thus compromising the overall credibility of the applicant's ability to implement (with the support of parents and educators) its RTT/D goals for personalizing learning environments.

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

20

8

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a)(i) Although teachers and support staff will be offered 'an intensive cafeteria menu' of professional development, it is not clear where these events will be held (again, an issue for the Holcomb district educators as this district is located hundreds of miles from the other three participating districts), who will provide the training, and to what extent a critical mass of teachers in each school will have the appropriate training to implement new strategies and environments to effectively implement personalized learning environments resulting in students becoming more college and career ready.

(C)(2)(a)(ii) & (iii) The applicant plans to conduct district needs assessments to see if adaptations to content and instruction is warranted; this assumes that the respondents may not see any needs for improved alignment between coursework and college/career ready standards -- thus not meeting the stated requirements in (a)(ii). Also, the applicant indicates that 'the' Professional Learning Community team (perhaps more appropriately named a school or district Leadership Team) will 'work through' the results of the needs assessments and MTSS strategies to plan for 'adaptations.' However, it is not clear how the schools' teachers will actually utilize data on students' progress to change their daily instruction and content to respond more effectively to students' individual academic needs and interests. There needs to be more information as to how the introduction of project-based learning and more rigorous coursework will lead to all students becoming more college and career ready; for instance, there is no guarantee that more high school students will sign up for dual credit options or a wider range of Advanced Placement courses even if they are offered.

(C)(2)(a)(iv) The applicant's districts are already conducting teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations as required by the state's Department of Education. These programs and processes will be reviewed and, in ways not specified, adjust them to be aligned with RTT/D requirements.

(C)(2)(b)(i) through (iii) The applicant's response is again lacking in specificity. That is, it notes that with RTT/D funding, the districts will immediately begin to implement MTSS and PLC strategies, providing educators with additional opportunities for professional development, digital resources, tools and classroom resources -- but it is not clear how this will actually happen and what new resources and tools will be made available to teachers so that they can provide students with appropriate feedback and resources to help them become more college/career ready.

(C)(2)(c)(i) & (ii) To address these requirements, the applicant will rely on MTSS, PLCs, school leadership teams, the teacher evaluation system, the state's Assessment Performance Indicators, and educators' participation in Leadership Academies and Principal and Superintendent Forums. However, there is a lack of information as to how these efforts will provide the training, policies, tools, data, and resources to actually improve educator effectiveness and student learning environments, accelerate student and school-wide progress, and close achievement gaps.

(C)(2)(d) The applicant contends that a majority of students in the consortium already have effective and highly effective teachers and principals. However, according to the table of Performance Measures in (E)(3), this varies widely from district to district. For instance, in SY 2013-14, 15% of Pittsburg students have highly effective Teachers/Principal, while 100% of students in Galena and Holcomb do so. Although the applicant intends to monitor the effectiveness of teachers and principals during the RTT/D project's implementation, there is no information as to its plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective/highly effective teachers and principals. That is, there is a lack of information regarding such a plan's key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, or parties responsible for implementing the activities to increase the percentage of students with such teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)(a) & (b) There appears to be adequate personnel in the RTT/D proposal to augment present staffing to attend to the project's priorities, including an overall Project Director, District Project Coordinators, Career Counselors/Student Advocates in districts' middle and high schools, Technology Facilitators/Instructional Coaches, and other district-specific personnel. The overall governance structure, policies, and infrastructure of the consortium or its four member districts are spelled out in considerable detail in the signed Memorandums of Understanding found at the end of the Appendix

section. These include the detailed responsibilities of the lead LEA, Galena (see MOU Section V, a through e), and in Section VI the initiation of an RTT/D advising group that will meet at least quarterly to make decisions around policies and operations, methods and processes, including the protocols for member LEAs to change roles or leave the Consortium. School Leadership Teams will also be developed, although their roles and responsibilities are not specified and it is not clear how much authority of autonomy such teams will be granted.

(D)(1)(c), (d) and (e) With RTT/D funding support, the consortium's districts intend to provide more project-based learning opportunities where mastery of standards can be demonstrated at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Other ways of assessing students' learning include the use of assessments such as the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), AIMS Web, and Study Island. It is not clear which of these are already in place in the districts' schools, or who will be responsible for how such assessment results will determine credit awarded for the mastery of course content and/or standards-based skills and knowledge -- especially at the elementary level. Learning resources and instructional practices will be accessible to students with disabilities with the help of the state's Technical Assistance System Network and regional educational cooperatives. There is no mention of English Language Learners, so it is not clear whether there are any such students enrolled in consortium districts' schools, and if so what adaptations and accessibility features will be in place for them.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2)(a) through (c) To help support personalized learning, the applicant intends to utilize RTT/D funding to strengthen LEA and schools' technology infrastructures; this approach makes sense as it includes upgrading network capacities, expanding wi-fi access, and the purchase of computers &/or tablets. Access outside of school buildings will be enhanced through partnerships with public libraries, community centers, local businesses and others who may be able to provide internet access. To increase access for students in need, wireless access may be provided through cell phone providers; details are not provided regarding how many students (and families) will need such access, and if cell phones as well as internet access will be provided. It appears helpful that each school will have technology competent career counselors/student advocates and contracted technology rich facilitators who will work with students and families, although more information is needed regarding the level of skill and roles/responsibilities of such individuals. After school hours support will be provided via telephone, though it is not clear who or what organizations will be responsible for this support. PowerSchool will provide teachers, parents, and students with data that can be uploaded into Alleyoop (a social guidance network for college-bound high teen-agers); other electronic learning systems are not described.

(D)(2)(d) The participating districts vary in their financial management systems; all four participate in the state's Master Data Management (MDM) initiative and the state's system for collecting individual data on students. Districts also use systems such as AptaFund and TalentEd Perform, which appear useful though not described as interoperable with other data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section is quite strong, describing how an external evaluator will provide a high quality plan for assessing, researching, and advising the consortium on how it might continuously improve its RTT/D

projects. Also, a consortium Advisory Board will review data, offer guidance, and ensure timely implementation of the RTT/D project; members will include representatives from each district's school boards, union(s), principals, teachers, students, parents, community colleges, and contributing community partners. In addition, student performance data will be regularly monitored by the Project Director, Advisory Board, and the external evaluator. The applicant districts will monitor and publicly share progress towards performance goals with a variety of stakeholders through a variety of formats and support any warranted changes to improve implementation. To improve student access to highly effective educators, ineffective educators will be released (after all reasonable supports are exhausted). Also note that in the Quantitative chart, the evaluation of Teacher Professional Development will only be assessed based on attendance at P.D. events (rather than any carry-over into improved teaching/learning in their classrooms). However, this section describes what is proposed for the years when the RTT/D grant will provide for continuous improvement; it does not address how this might continue *after* the grant funding is concluded.

The weakness in this section is the lack of specificity of the evaluation deliverables that may impair the quality of the opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response to (E)(2) is limited in depth and scope. That is, a high level of communication and engagement is based on existing structures such as superintendent and principal forums, and teacher professional development opportunities (although presentations at school faculty/staff meetings had been mentioned in previous sections). The progress of RTT/D projects will be shared regularly with parents and students through PTOs, school-wide events, newsletters, blogs, websites, annual reports, and School Reach telephone mechanisms. There is no evidence that these basically 'one way' means of communication will generate engagement or that there will be a solid process for gathering feed-back and suggestions for possible adjustments and revisions during the projects' implementation. In addition, key elements of a high quality plan are missing, e.g, there is no delineation of activities to be undertaken (and their rationale), time-line, deliverables, &/or -- and this is key -- who/what parties will be responsible for implementing the overall plan for communication and engagement. Further, there is an absence of information about how the community organizations, businesses, local colleges/universities and other external stakeholders will be informed and engaged.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance measures were selected to address systems change "from the top down," perhaps a counter-productive approach for an RTT/D project that is ultimately directed towards the transformation of classroom environments and the effectiveness of project-based effective teaching that will lead to all students becoming college and career ready. Another concern is that in the Goal charts in this section, the goals and performance measures are described in somewhat vague terms. For instance, consortium members will increase the number and percentage of students by subgroup who have effective &/or highly effective teachers and principals by 2017-18 as compared to a Fall 2014 baseline; as stated, this 'increase' could be minimal.

Further, some of the performance measures appear inadequate or mis-matched to the objectives they are supposed to measure. For example, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is going to be used to assess the social and emotional development of students entering Kindergarten. Some of the data is missing and thus difficult to understand or analyze; that is, four of the performance measure charts are completely blank with the note that baseline [data] will be collected in the Fall of 2014; protective and risk factors are also not included as these factors and baseline [data] will be established in the summer of 2014. Although ambitious, it is difficult to be confident of the achievability of what limited data is provided regarding student growth. For instance, of 33% of children are described as socially-emotionally ready for Kindergarten in 2013-14, while 90% are projected to be ready in 2017-18.

Academic objectives are lacking in strength. For instance, one objective is to increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement, dual credit, college readiness programming, or college courses during high school with enrollment as the only indicator of success -- rather than the number of students who successfully complete such options (or, for instance, the number of students who take AP courses and earn a 3 or above on AP exams). Also, the leading indicator for academic growth is the percentage of students moving from one performance category to another as determined by the Assessment Performance Index (As stated, this could potentially include students who shift down to a lower category of achievement!). For individual students, however, such a jump up to a higher category could entail one or two points, and for others considerably more points.

There is also a lack of compelling rationales for selecting each measure, and incomplete information about how the selected measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information about the success or areas of concern with the implemented project components as well as actually how the measures will be reviewed and improved over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In this brief response to (E)(4), the applicant notes that the consortium members routinely report effectiveness data for their federal and state initiatives presently in place and "this project will be no different." This is a concern, since some federal projects may only require annual data collections and reporting, and the RTT/D projects will necessitate a plan for far more intensive short-term assessments of the various components' impact and effectiveness so that its overall plan can be adjusted and revised in a more timely way as necessary and appropriate. The response in this section also omits information concerning how the evaluation of RTT/D funded project components will include the RTT/D required elements of a high quality approach to continuously improve its plans. For instance there is a lack of information about specific evaluation activities, time-lines, deliverables, and/or the designation of the parties responsible for implementing the evaluation of components such as professional development and activities that involve technology.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(1)(a) The applicant's budget is divided into four distinct budgets, one for each of the four participating consortium LEA members, with the total of 6,407 students (and their educators) supported through a total of \$19,974,500.02 RTT/D funds, thus increasing financial support for services, supports, opportunities, and interventions by the significant amount of \$3,118.00 per student. In addition, as the lead LEA and fiscal agent, Galena's budget includes overall fiscal costs of external evaluation, advisory board meetings, and the development of online templates and secure storage for personalized student learning plans and teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations, along with the cost of a Project Director.

Within the Budget Table 1-1, the Overall Budget Summary Table, there are zero funds listed as coming from non-RTT/D sources that would be used to support the project, a significant gap in commitments of other local, state, federal, business, and foundation monies that could be potentially useful in meeting some of the costs in the overall Project TRAIN consortium budgets.

(F)(1)(b) It appears that the applicant's (four) budgets are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant consortium's overall goals and their four LEA

members' goals. The challenge is that the presented budget reflects broad common goals, but each of the participating LEAs in the Consortium has its own needs and priorities as reflected in their individual budgets. This contributes to a lack of coherence and consistency across the four budgets for the development and implementation of the overall proposal as well as difficulty in knowing the extent to which each of these four LEAs will be able to support long-term sustainability of their RTT/D investments in programs, technology, and personnel.

(F)(1)(c)(i) The funds for all the described projects are coming from an RTT/D grant, thus there is no further information regarding other funding sources. Project funds are allocated for training, expansion of existing programming and the development and implementation of new programming, and the acquisition of technology and infrastructure to support the expansion of college career pathways and personalized learning plans.

(F)(1)(c)(ii) In the budget narrative, the applicant differentiates one-time investments from on-going operational costs. For example, the applicant states that one-time investments include the expansion/creation of new 'career pathways,' the development of the personalized learning plan online portal. On-going operational costs include personnel (35.5%), professional development activities (9.7%), infrastructure and equipment (10.3%), other activities and products to support personalized learning environments (12.5%), and contracted services (8.2%). The on-going costs the applicant considers sustainable post RTT/D grant funding although this is difficult to ascertain. For instance, the applicant estimates that in Year One following RTT/D funding, the total amount needed to sustain Professional Development, the additional Personnel, and Technology and Infrastructure will be \$11 million dollars. There is a lack of evidence as to what strategies will be utilized to find such an amount from local communities/businesses, state, federal, higher education, and/or foundation sources -- for Year One or for the years that follow.

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

It is perhaps unduly optimistic for the applicant to state that the RTT/D investments in technology and infrastructure will be 'easily maintained' after the RTT/D funding has ended, as there is likely to be a significant need for replacing broken and out-dated equipment as well as continuing to upgrade internet access, software, data management systems, etc.

For post-grant financial support, the applicant is relying on partnerships with local colleges/universities and the LEAs' local communities. However, it is not clear that these partnerships and relationships will be nurtured and/or solidly built during the time of the RTT/D funding (or even during the proposal's development) so that it is difficult to believe that these will be thriving and can be relied upon financially in the months and years following RTT/D funding.

In addition, the response to (F)(2) lacks persuasive specifics of a high quality plan for sustainability. For instance, although this section includes a brief summary of estimated expenses for the three years following RTT/D grant funding, the applicant is relying on the Project Director, the LEAs' Project Coordinators, and Advisory Board members to identify and obtain on-going post RTT/D funding from state, federal, and foundation funding opportunities. However, these individuals and groups are likely to be extremely busy implementing and monitoring the RTT/D program's successes and challenges and are thus unlikely to have the time, energy, or resources, to apply to as yet un-specified external funding sources for post-RTT/D support. Also, the budget assumptions, activities and deliverables for such sustainability plans are not clearly stated.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: There is no evidence that the applicant is seeking funding for a Competitive Preference Priority program.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Although the applicant's proposal often lacks all of the elements of a coherent and comprehensive plan to significantly improve the quality of personalized teaching and learning environments for all participating students, this consortium of four small rural LEAs does have a sense of their respective teachers' and students' needs and a vision for how they would like to address those needs.		

Total	210	108
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**Race to the Top - District
Technical Review Form**

Application #0044KS-4 for Galena USD 499

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: A1a-The applicant clearly articulates commitment to a reform vision to build on and include the common core standards through- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorous academic standards are effectively addressed through Kansas adoption of Common Core Standards which will impact student learning in a positive way and further improve a student's ability to successfully compete in the global economy. • Data systems such as Powerschool and KIDS Collection are used to complement the state-based system which uses Annual Measurable Objective's to inform instructional goals for improvement efforts with a comprehensive timeline. • Recruitment, development, renewal and retention through KEEB resources that are specific to teachers, but lack specifics to address principal effectiveness, training and retention. • Although only one school in the consortium is defined by the state as a Focus School in need of support on the state level, 100% of consortium members participate in the Kansas Technical Assistance Support Network (TASN) for technical assistance and support for low school turn around. This indicates a strong commitment to reform and transparency. The TASN provides workshops, training, individual consultation and follow-up to ensure academic improvement trends over time. By including all schools in the districts as a part of TASN, the lowest and lower 		

performing schools would be able to draw from district level resources to collaborate for immediate and ongoing district-wide support.

A1b-The vision “to provide a comprehensive, systems change approach to increasing student achievement” is ambitious and designed to foster LEA, teacher, parent and student engagement as well as support the four core assurances. The heart of the vision involves extensive professional development opportunities to ensure teachers' technical expertise. Personalized Learning Plans and instruction thereof is guided by data resulting from the Kansas Career fields and Clusters, which is a model for accelerating and deepening learning using student interests. The applicant also indicates a strong commitment to project based learning and use of technology, which promise to individualize and deepen student learning. Career and education programming such as High Schools that Work along with the Multi-Tier System of Supports for data supported rapid intervention are also intended to raise the achievement levels of career bound students.

A1c The classroom experiences are acknowledged as unique to each LEA, the central premise is based on Hanover’s Best Practices to include collaboration, project planning, decision making and time management. The classroom experience is extensively detailed for students who participate in internship programs. According to the budget proposal the number of interns appears to be limited and therefore the classroom experience of the majority of students is limited. The teacher’s experience in the personalized learning environment is not evident.

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

A2a Upon the announcement of the RTTD, Kansas school districts were invited to participate as a consortium applicant. The process for participating is voluntary. All 4 districts within the consortium have 100% of schools, staff and students participating in the project. It is significant that the districts involved in the consortium are voluntary because it ensures the buy-in of the comprehensive systems change, in particular that of the educators poised to implement the student level personalized learning plans. This all-inclusive program of Project TRAIN further supports the vision of a comprehensive systems change to increase achievement, especially that of its neediest schools within the consortium.

A2b The proposal includes a complete list of 100% of schools in 4 districts participating in the project. The 100% commitment to participate in Project TRAIN by entire districts indicate a strong commitment to reform.

A2c Raw data include the total actual number and percentages of students participating by school, grade bands and sub-groups listed for 20 schools with the total number of students being served as 6,407 and total number of educators participating as 829.5.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A3 The proposal states that “The shift from meeting an annual target to ensuring students are college and career ready is key to the future of Kansas students”. The plan presents qualified research to support their philosophy, which is accessed through the Kansas ESEA Flexibility Waiver. Adhering to this reason, the project has the potential for bold gains. The high quality plan proposed has 2 specific goals:

- To implement strategies for systems change at the district level over 4 years and
- To implement comprehensive professional development opportunities for teachers

These goals have a solid rationale of building a strong foundation of support for systems change and to strengthen instructional practice through quality professional development to establish effective and highly effective classroom teachers, which will improve learning outcomes through personalized learning plans for all students in the consortium. The objectives include evidence based system-wide practices to address academic and behavior needs, such as MTSS. Data provided through the indicated performance measures will support comprehensive reform to improve student achievement. Additionally, the objective of increasing the number and percentage of students by subgroup with highly effective teachers and principals is recognized nationally as one of the topmost methods to increase achievement.

The comprehensive timeline with specific activities along with the deliverables and parties responsible include hiring key personnel to deliver programming, train, and reinforce teachers’ instructional strategies for personalized learning plans. The foundation of this ambitious plan will rely on teacher engagement in the proposed philosophy. Although the proposal includes all schools within each district, there is no evidence within the plan on how the project could be used as a model for systems change beyond the consortium.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

A4 The project establishes building leadership teams who are designated as parties responsible for monitoring and evaluating student learning. These teams use the MTSS, self-correcting feedback loop and the 5R accreditation model to ensure strategies are in place to effectively implement change in student outcomes. The plan does not state what specific strategies are used as a part of these models by the building leadership teams to implement and/or ensure change in student outcomes. Two specific ambitious, achievable goals with activities are evident:

- Improving academic and non-cognitive outcomes for K-8- this goal addresses kindergarten readiness, increasing reading and math proficiency, career awareness participation and meeting the 8th grade benchmark in reading and math on the EXPLORE. Meeting this comprehensive goal underlies improvement in graduation rates overall. Moreover, non-cognitive objectives increase selected protective factors and decrease risk factors related to overall student achievement.
- Ensuring all students are adequately prepared for post-secondary options-the objectives of increasing AP/dual credit options and ensuring growth in math and reading underscore improvement in graduation rates. Non-cognitive objectives of increasing numbers of FAFSA applications and internships related to career pathways act toward realistically improving graduation rates as well as increasing post-secondary options.

Both goals encompass and support the over-arching rationale of working to improve the cycle of instruction and meet the criteria of ambitious yet achievable goals in that they are meaningful for the proposal and for assessing progress. The plan does not specifically address equity as a separate component however it is reasonable that equity among subgroups will result given the building leadership teams are tasked with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating student learning so *all* students can achieve through the goals of improving summative performance, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates and increasing college enrollment.

A4a Performance on summative assessments is documented as a baseline for each school building in the areas of math and reading along with predicted growth and proficiency levels include all students. The documentation along with the predicted rates of growth meet the criteria of ambitious yet achievable goals in that they are meaningful for the proposal and for assessing progress.

A4b Decreasing achievement gaps is extensively documented by district and by sub-group. The goal is to reduce non-proficient status of each sub-group. The end result as compared to the baseline is reasonable in that the estimated percentages in reduction of non-proficient status match the overall goal of reducing the non-proficient status by 50%. Through the Kansas approved ESEA Flexibility waiver, sub-groups are only applicable for reduction of non-proficient data.

A4c- Graduation rates for all students are detailed by each district, sub-groups are not addressed with raw data. The predicted rates of improvement overall is 5.6% in the initial post grant year. Within 3 districts the predicted rates of growth are overall 4.8% and are minimal as compared to Galena's prediction of 8% overall growth in the initial post grant year. It should be noted that the raw data for Galena's improvement goal jumps significantly from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The end-goal graduation rate for Galena vs. the other districts is confusing. In addition, the growth from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 baseline year is .8%. The predicted goals for consortium overall goal improvement .8% annual throughout the grant timeframe, which is unclear since a significant improvement initiative is in effect.

A4d- The applicant is lacking college enrollment data. Baseline data to be collected in Fall 2014. It is difficult to determine the ambitious yet achievable goals' impact in this area without documentation.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

B1a The proposal indicates a clear record of success in partnering with community resources to provide alternative ways to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. All four districts cite evidence where they successfully received alternative funding for after school programming. In addition, Labette received funding to establish technology rich classrooms in several of their elementary schools to increase student achievement. Seeking out community resources and alternative funding sources is time intensive and demonstrates a strong commitment to system wide school improvement.

- Raw data indicate 2 of 4 districts (50%) showing improvement in reading/math scores from year 2008 to year 2012 for proficient and above.
- Raw data indicate graduation rates from 2010 to 2012 have improved in 3 of 4 districts. Baseline college enrollment is not available and the applicant does not demonstrate a track record of success in college enrollment for this sub-criteria.
- Raw data indicate core classes taught by highly qualified teachers from 2008-2012 increased in 3 of 4 districts. Research indicates that HQ teachers are a significant factor in increasing student achievement.

B1b There is no current evidence listed regarding previous four years of reform in the lowest achieving school.

B1c The current data system, Powerschool, is presently available to stakeholders. It is not clear how the data available has informed and improved participation, instruction and services in the past 4 years.

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

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

B2 The LEA consortium members follow legal guidelines where each LEA publishes an annual budget that details expenditures for K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support and school administration. Kansas law requiring annual school budgeting does not require specific personnel salaries. Three transparency websites are available through the state of Kansas for the general public to view how tax dollars are spent. A high level of transparency as required to meet the criteria is not demonstrated by the applicant.

- Currently 1 of 4 LEAs provides personnel salaries at the school level for teachers, instructional and support staff, 3 LEAs do not demonstrate that they already makes available the stated four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds as required by the RTTD for increasing transparency.
- Local school boards of each district are required by law to publish names, positions and salaries of the superintendent and department heads of the school district.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

B3 Project TRAIN consortium members have sound evidence of full autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments as a strategy to improve student achievement. In addition, the ESEA Flexibility waiver is in place through Kansas State Board of Education and there are no laws or regulations to prevent students from participating in personalized learning environments. Kansas is considered to be a local control state where educators have the autonomy to determine the instructional methods necessary for students. The described autonomy is convincing in that the individual districts have the authority to proceed with individual learning environments to increase student achievement.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

B4a The proposal reports that each consortium member discussed the application with stakeholders including boards of education, principals, teachers and labor union representatives. The applicant is vague regarding the settings under which discussions took place. The MOUs are signed by each district superintendent, local school board president and the local teachers' union association president.

- Notification of the proposal and review process occurred 9/13-27, 2013.
- There is limited evidence of solicitation of feedback through telephone calls and no evidence of how proposal was revised based on stakeholders' feedback.

There is no evidence of how students and families were engaged in developing Project TRAIN.

B4ai The MOUs were signed by all districts' teachers union presidents indicating support for the proposal. Teacher support and engagement in day-to-day instruction using the personalized learning plan data is critical to the success of the project.

B4b There is strong evidence of support from parents, students, PTO/PTA, and local government officials through written letters provided.

The evidence overall through the MOUs and the letters of support from the communities involved as well as the student groups and PTOs indicate that there is overwhelming support for a change in instructional strategy to include personalized learning environments in order to improve student achievement.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

C1 The commitment of the TRAIN consortium to student empowerment is evident through commitment to personnel resources of service learning coordinators and career counselors/student advocates. The applicant states that “students will have another layer of support virtually unheard of in rural settings”. It is described that through the facilitation by new school based personnel that personalized learning plans will be developed for all students. The plan does not provide specific strategies to address the specialized needs of special education and other high-risk students.

(a) i) There is limited evidence of parent involvement along with the educators in support of the PLPs to support student understanding of educational relevance through use of KCP and Individual student Career Plans to support students’ identification and pursuit of academic and career goals. There is limited evidence of parent involvement

ii) It is evident that students will be able to identify and pursue learning goals through career and college ready curriculum and activities, but there is limited evidence of students’ self-monitoring and measurement of progress. There is limited evidence of *students’* understanding of how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and limited evidence of parent involvement through provided data assessments .

iii) There is strong evidence cited for deepening students’ learning through project based learning, the CP curriculum, AP and dual credit courses, interactive distance learning and internships which are directly related to career pathways. Middle school students are offered opportunities to develop leadership skills through a Student Leadership Academy designed to develop advanced skills in science, technology and social skills. It is significant that the academy builds equity for female learners by ensuring a 1:1 ratio of males to females.

iv) Access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives is available through local state Regents University by planned events for exposure to international students and special events highlighting cultures. This partnership which is designed to deepen individual learning experiences is clearly important to the applicant in that it is a line item in the budget.

v) It is evident that the TRAIN consortium plans a variety of programming to ensure mastery of critical academic content and non-cognitive skills. College readiness programming using resources such as AVID will be expanded from 2 to 4 districts, personalized plans of study in K-7 through project based learning and service learning activities related to college and career readiness, PPS for 8th and above includes Individual Career Plans of Study integrating career/technical and academic standards, high quality content of AP courses online and interactive distance learning available digitally. These skills, especially non-cognitive skills such as communication skills, teamwork and perseverance are critical in a global society.

(b) i) The foundation of the TRAIN plan is the personalized learning plan of study incorporating career clusters and interests to direct instruction. The age appropriate K-7 model uses project based learning and service learning with specific objectives. 8-12 PLPs are more intensive and contain a comprehensive 6 year plan for each student. The early attention to authentic learning experiences and the Kansas state personal plans of study focused on individual career plans are strategic points in developing PLPs. There is limited evidence of parent involvement in accessing student data for support in decision making.

ii) Infusing technology throughout the curriculum to create interactive learning environments, self-paced

instruction and instant access to supplemental materials is promising. The model relies on a technology facilitator to assist teachers with design, integration and evaluation of technology in the classroom and career counselors to work with parents who lack internet access.

iii) The applicant reports increasing AP courses and a distance learning network will be available to enhance current distance learning and AP course offerings. The consortium will work with community colleges to offer additional dual credit courses. Funding has been allocated to upgrade equipment and connections. The applicant describes activities to provide high quality content but clear strategies for putting these specific programs in place are limited.

iv) a,b) Through the MTSS and professional learning communities data will be monitored quarterly and updated annually to determine progress toward mastery. The timeliness of monitoring is sufficient to meet the criteria because frequent monitoring is important in that interventions can be put in place as needed. There is limited evidence of parent involvement regarding the personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills.

v) Accommodations are addressed for special education students through their special education cooperatives but limited evidence of specific strategies for addressing other high-risk student needs.

c. Online portals for PLP access are a line item in the budget. It is clear that the consortium seeks to engage families in the PLP of their students. These 24/7 access points ensure parent and student engagement in the tracking and managing of student learning. In addition, Powerschool is currently available for access. Effective mechanisms are in place for students and families without internet access to ensure involvement. Technical support and training for parents and students is planned and evidence for ensuring student and parent knowledge is apparent.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C2

(a) Helping teachers improve their instruction and capacity through intensive professional development opportunities to increase the numbers of effective and highly effective classroom teachers supports the implementation of personalized learning for all students.

- i. Professional development is time intensive and administrators are committed to ensure adequate planning time and resources to ensure effective implementation in order to increase capacity and the numbers of effective and highly effective classroom teachers which is know to impact and increase student achievement and graduation rates. PD is a line item in the budget.
- ii. There is an extensive offering of professional development and coaching available to address specific strategies such as project based learning, online coursework, additional AP teacher certification to be offered. An in depth needs assessment to determine additional adaptations or content is sound and will further develop optimal learning approaches. There is little evidence of adaptation of content and instruction based on student interest.
- iii. The project specifies a specific time frame for monitoring data-once per quarter- This is a reasonable measure for informing on students' progress. The use of the MTSS will also support immediate intervention by keeping students on track for post-secondary options. There is no evidence of using data to inform acceleration of student progress.
- iv. Teacher and principal evaluation systems are in place as a requirement of the Kansas Department of Education. The formal rubric for teachers is provided and is comprehensive, and it allows for written feedback.
- v. While the project uses a state mandated evaluation tool, there is no evidence of a specific timeline to ensure frequent feedback or additional support and interventions.

b. The commitment to the project through the over arching goal of implementing comprehensive professional development opportunities for teachers ensures that educators have access to tools, knowledge and resources to increase student progress.

(i)The MTSS, Professional Learning Communities, needs assessments, and variety of PD opportunities are effective strategies to identify optimal learning approaches responding to individual academic needs and interests.

ii) Common Core alignment and PD, needs assessments and technology infusion to facilitate instruction are described as high quality learning resources. While mentioned the evidence is brief but incomplete on sharing and creating new resources.

iii) The consortium relies on PD for teachers with specific content resources to match students' needs. The components of the PLP include data for analysis by students, parents and educators, which will provide continuous feedback to inform instruction and to determine the effectiveness of resources. The MTTTS and Professional Learning Communities strategy are cited as immediate avenues of providing feedback. The PD, data analysis and immediate feedback strategies are effective methods as resources for improving student achievement.

- c. It is evident that educator training is a large component of the PLP. Data systems including the state's system of Assessment Performance Indicators are in place to inform and enable an effective learning environment.
- d. The teacher evaluation system is apparent; the principal evaluation system is vaguely mentioned. The application is short on specific ways teacher evaluation data will overall continuous school improvement.
- e. Professional Learning Communities, participation in Leadership Academies, Principal and Superintendent Forums are cited as ways for educators to remain on the forefront of research based strategies to increase student achievement. The commitment to ongoing technology facilitators within each school will substantially move the project toward their goal of increasing student achievement.

(d) The applicant includes performance measures to increase the numbers of effective and highly effective teachers along with an extensive plan for professional development to ensure achievement. There is no evidence that the performance measures impact the numbers of students in hard to staff schools and specialty areas who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>D1 The TRAIN project has comprehensive policies in place to ensure autonomy, one being the Kansas Flexibility waiver and another being the MOUs signed by the supentendents, school board presidents and local teacher unions representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The lead LEA is designated as providing the space and fiscal management with a program director to provide oversight to the consortium members. The project manager's role and responsibilities are defined with an adequate rationale through a line item in the budget. b. The consortium acknowledges that through the MOUs the group is connected through TRAIN commitments, however each LEA retains autonomy as independent, locally controlled school districts. This is clearly evident through the design of the individual budgets where each school district employs personnel based on their individual needs. There is vague mention of the role of school leadership teams. c. Project based learning is one component of the PLP described by the applicant to personalize learning. While evaluation of projects and student mastery of content is mentioned, there is limited specific evidence of students progressing and earning credit based on mastery. d. The applicant indicates that multiple measures of available data within the PLP will be used to measure student progress. Specific strategies for allowing students to demonstrate mastery are limited. e. As a component of Title I, consortium members provide learning resources and instructional resources that are adaptable and fully accessible. The TASN resource in which all schools are participating in is an additional support to ensure accessibility for all learners. Each district is also a part of a special education cooperative for support and special education services. These efforts will ensure accessibility for all students. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>D2 Technology use as a strategic way to improve instruction and improve learning is woven throughout the proposal and is</p>		

a key to the personalized learning plan.

(a) Technology access is evident in school through increasing the infrastructure within each district. The partnerships established with the community will enable access out of school through the public library, community centers and local businesses so that all students will have equal access. Funding for access via cell phone providers will be provided on a case-by-case basis. This plan will close the gap of technology availability outside of school.

(b) Technical support is clearly evident through the hiring of key personnel in school to provide expertise and training for students, parents and teachers. Community resources within each community will be identified to provide after hours support, and intensive PD for teachers will be implemented.

(c) Powerschool provides the ability for parents and students to export data into other electronic learning systems such as Alleyoop. It is not evident that the PLP online portal is able to export data.

(d) Each consortium member participates in the statewide Master Data Management Initiative for human resources, MACS for financial management, TalentED for IEP management, Powerschool and KIDS for student data. It is not clear if these systems are interoperable.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- E(1) The applicant has a plan to address continuous improvement with a reasonable timeline, activities, deliverables and parties responsible, however it lacks specifically stated goals for addressing continuous improvement. It is significant to note that the role of an external evaluator is a key component of the plan, which ensures reliability. In addition, advisory boards of key stakeholder representation are planned to meet quarterly in order to review and monitor data, offer guidance and ensure timely implementation. The rubric of the 5 R's- Relationships, Relevance, Responsive Culture, Rigor and Results- is a very effective method of monitoring implementation within each district. The applicant states that if a strategy within a district is not moving from implementing to transitioning to modeling, steps will be taken through the MTSS or professional learning communities to provide support or replace the strategy. It is not clear which party is responsible for the 5R rubric. Student performance data will be monitored by the project director, external evaluator and advisory board, and progress toward goals will be measured by each building. The quantitative measures of progress are clearly indicated as MAP, AIMS web, Standardized Testing and Reporting, state content assessments, EXPLORE, PLAN, PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP results. Qualitative measures for continuous improvement are also included: evaluator site visits, annual teacher, principal and teacher evaluations, counselor observations, college ready programming reports, classroom observations and formative assessments. A comprehensive plan for formal data sharing is evident. Formal data analysis will be shared with stakeholders and conducted through annual evaluation reports, and staff debriefings are held annually. All findings are to be publically shared with all stake holders-not just school boards, community members and partners. The annual findings are to be shared with the Kansas Department of Education, Kansas Association of School Administrators, the Kansas Association of School Boards and other service providers. The findings will also be shared via presentations and professional development conferences, direct mailings, website postings and social media.

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

E(2) There is incomplete evidence for a high quality plan to address ongoing communication and engagement. The applicant describes activities of communication and engagement through plans for project based learning and community partnerships, professional development and the existing structure of stakeholder meetings. It is evident that current school level communication vehicles, planned parent meetings and school wide events are in place to communicate with and engage parents. In addition, the applicant plans to convey findings through web-based means as well as annual meetings. The applicant is lacking specific goals to address ongoing communication, a specific timeline to provide a framework for achievement, and specific parties responsible.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>E(3) The applicant lists the performance measures for the required criteria. Out of 12 required measures 5 plan to collect baseline data in Fall 2014. It is reasonable that the baseline data would be collected in Fall 2014 because of the tie-in to the personalized learning plan's emphasis on career and college ready data. The objective on Goal 3 for middle school students to increase by 20% from baseline over the life of the project is confusing in that Career Awareness and Career Pathways identification is the framework for the personalized learning plans. The additional performance measures of decreasing selected risk factors with the school, community and peer domains combined with the performance measure of increasing selective protective measures for the same, both measured by the Kansas Communities that Care survey annually will provide additional data for evaluation.</p> <p>(a) There is a good rationale for selection of the age specific assessments based on research and comparability.</p> <p>(b) An external evaluator will be contracted to provide guidance, rigor, and timeliness regarding implementation success and areas of concern using multiple points of measurement. The evaluation timeline effectively describes the procedure.</p> <p>(c) The applicant acknowledges that key instruments to measure effectiveness may change over time. If current measures are deemed insufficient, the consortium members and external evaluator are tasked with conducting a thorough research of the literature to find a suitable replacement. The applicant does not demonstrate having a plan that will successfully allow them to identify what data analysis will determine when those measures are faulty. It is appropriate that the applicant's project director and external evaluator will work in conjunction with RTT program officers to discuss any changes prior to a final decision.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although evaluation strategies specific to student achievement through RTTD funded activities are interwoven throughout the proposal, there is limited evidence of a high quality plan including specific key goals for evaluation. Evaluation of technology-based activities such as infrastructure and professional development are to be determined based on external evaluator assessment and on an individual basis. The timeline for the evaluation requirements lists data collection, data analysis and data reporting as activities and deliverables with the external evaluator as the responsible party. There is insufficient evidence of a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the stated activities.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>F1 (a) The applicant's budget identifies all funding specific to the project through four distinct budgets representing the four districts in the consortium to include personnel costs, professional development costs, contracted activities, equipment and infrastructure, supplies and other costs. The applicant states that all costs for equipment and contractual agreements are estimated and will be finalized through a formal bidding process. Given that technology is such an integral part of the proposal there is a discrepancy in the salary stated for the same technology facilitator position among four districts ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000. The applicant notes that each district is committed to providing budgetary support as needed from other state, federal and regional initiatives including but not limited to 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Communities in Schools, Title I funds and private foundations, however a range for how much additional funding is not stated.</p> <p>(b) The estimated costs based on rates conducive to the area are reasonable to support the development and implementation of the project. As noted, the range in the technology facilitator position salaries is confusing given the rationale, scope and responsibilities for the same position within each district.</p> <p>(c)(i) The applicant notes that all funding is related to building a systems wide change and to increase the capacity of each consortium member. The rationale for the funds allotted "to support the expansion of college career pathways and personalized learning plans" is reasonable and includes sufficient documentation of expenditures.</p> <p>(c) (ii) The applicant clearly identifies one-time investments. The applicant is vague on strategies that ensure ongoing costs</p>		

of the program are available to ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

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

F2 With large one-time expenditures such as technology infrastructure, equipment and initial professional development in place, each consortium member pledges to “leverage existing funds” and strengthen community partnerships. Although there is a minimal timeline with an estimated budget, there is no evidence of a high quality plan with key goals, activities, deliverables and parties responsible for the sustainability of the project goals and to use this data to inform future investments.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Although the applicant did not specifically include information regarding Competitive Preference Priority, some evidence is qualified.

1. Sustainable partnerships are in place- Pittsburgh has afterschool programming for elementary and middle schools through the 21st Century Learning Center funding and the Communities in Schools partnership to establish Jobs for Graduates programming; Holcomb has a JAG program, 21st Century Learning Center at elementary schools and a partnership with Holcomb recreation commission for a day intervention program for middle schools: Labette has secured funding for establishing technology rich elementary classrooms and Department of Justice funding to improve student safety and security on all campuses; Galena has afterschool programming for elementary and middle schools through the 21st Century Learning Center funding. All consortium members have community college affiliations to establish dual-credit programs for high schools and all districts partner with a local university to ensure diversity through cultural events.
2. The applicant has sufficient population-level desired results-increased academic and non-cognitive outcomes for K-12 with data measures to drive instruction and increasing effective and highly effective educators for every level and sub-group. Family and community supports are limited to a description of designated personnel: Student advocates/career counselors or service learning coordinators for each building and Labette has designated a licensed clinical therapist for social and emotional support for students and staff. In addition, community partnerships are planned for providing technology assistance and access.
3. While there is evidence of the consortium tracking, measuring and using data for improvement, there is no evidence how a partnership with community organizations track selected indicators or use data to improve results overtime.
4. There is no evidence describing how partnerships with community organizations integrate education and other services.
5. There is no evidence describing how the partnership *and* LEA build the capacity of staff.
6. While there is evidence of the consortium alone identifying performance measures, there is no evidence of the role of the partnerships and integrated services impact.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This applicant meets all requirements of Absolute Priority 1 by comprehensively building on the core educational assurance areas by addressing educational needs in direct response to the Kansas Career Fields and Clusters Model to significantly inform instruction, and improve learning and teaching through a personalized learning plan aligned with college and career ready standards and graduation requirements. In addition, the plan to build capacity among educators will accelerate student achievement, deepen learning and increase student access to effective and highly effective educators which is a factor in decreasing achievement gaps and improvement in graduation rates.

Total	210	147
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