



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0034AZ-2 for Maricopa County Education Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Goal to implement PEARLS is present and has a clear target of students they want to work with which shows a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.</p> <p>Their partnerships are not only feasible but specified and indicates support of their plan which meets the criteria.</p> <p>Money is in place for assessment of highly qualified teachers as well as principals who will be participating with the target students</p> <p>Goals were clear and precise about who and how many students would be achieving their goals with a clear plan to get students there</p> <p>(a) Each of the four core educational assurance areas are noted separately and expanded upon as required. PEARLS is explained and expanded upon with reference to each of the four core areas and shows specifically that PEARLS will support each core area. PEARLS supports standards and assessments to prepare students for college and careers by implementing Common Core and also working with Central Florida Assessment Collaborative, as well as supporting a Multi Tiered System to use data systems to inform teachers.</p> <p>(b) Increasing equity is not mentioned specifically but addressed when they say 100% of all students (this implies equity). Specific Performance Measures and Specific Measurement tools are reported which strengthens this application.</p> <p>(c) 6 areas of classroom differentiation was addressed and expanded upon. These goals were clear and there was a specific plan in place with partners already designated. A description of experience for students and teachers was clear and concise.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is a strong response to implementing this proposal and how it supports high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation with each of the criteria being examined and explained.</p> <p>(a) 22 schools out of 30 are participating with no clear articulation of how these were selected weakens this response and does not show a clear explanation of this criteria.</p> <p>(b) Participating schools are listed and defined which strengthens this application with a total number of participating students is defined and explained which strengthens this application</p> <p>(c) Which students are participating based on low income and free and reduced lunch is clearly defined. Clear implementation plan and rollout were addressed with clear job descriptions and who is responsible for each piece of implementation is addressed and expanded upon in order to support the four core areas.</p>		

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

This application provides a reasonable plan for scaling-up and translating this program into meaningful district wide reform. Including CTE as part of the implementation of this plan and integrating CTE into their plan is a strong component of a high quality plan.

The plan includes a timeline and very specific goals for each stage of their plan

The plan is comprehensive and reasonable and includes not only who will be implementing each stage but also what will be needed to implement each stage

The district-wide change is present and includes details

Weaknesses of this plan lie in the lack improvement over the next 3 years which should have been addressed as part of the high quality plan because it would show that there is thought about the future and sustainability of this program.

Logic and management plan needs possible changes into the comments in order to address how this plan will continue to support students. The criteria that includes strong goals when addressing alignment, training, and adapting academic interventions to meet student needs are vague in this application

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This application does not clearly show how their vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

(a) The baseline information strengthens this application with clear goals for student growth on summative assessments. There is admitted missing data due to the school's lack of ability to take baseline data and also that some schools are taking different types of data, such as if students come to school. These statements are ambiguous and lack clarity in understanding which schools are able to take data and which are not. Also, this does not address how this feedback is going to be changed in order to meet the needs of this application

(b) The application lists the targets that are available but then there is a lack of specifics on how they plan to implement achievable goals. There are missing steps in this process with no clear connection between the target and the implementation. There is also a lack of information as to how this application will decrease the achievement gap and show student growth in this area.

(c) (d) No ESEA targets attempted and also this data lacks clarity as to which schools and which LEA's are participating in the data. Data is increasing with 2% but not based on any data they have or taken. This lacks concise information to make it hard to analyze.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The quality of information given for this criteria was lacking and weakened this application.

(a) The graphs and charts were quite clear about student achievement and the increase in their scores, however not all data from all schools was included which weakens the understanding of student improvement.

"Most LEA's" weakens this application because "most" is not defined.

(b) no clear data around this

No evidence of ambitious reform and 8 out of 10 LEA's mentioned

(c) Clear record of success for learning outcomes and closing the achievement gaps

No information on improving and informing student improvements

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This application showed a high level of transparency.

(a) (b) (c) Information is available through websites which is a strength of this application. The salaries of all personnel are available to the entire public via websites and in person if requested makes this application strong with regards to this criteria.

(d) School expenditures are required by law and this is mentioned so this information is present and accounted for in this application which meets the criteria.

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

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements are in place to implement this program throughout the state and addresses the criteria.

Data Systems and Data Use as well as Standards and Assessment strengthen this application

An Education and Career Plan are also in place and strengthen the implementation plan

Teacher and Principal Evaluation is in place and legally required which is mentioned

There is missing clarification connecting this criteria to personalized student learning.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement. This application explained how students, families, teachers and principals were engaged in developing this proposal.

(ii) Of all teachers responding over 70% are in favor which shows evidence of support for this program. Out of all teachers, 61% support this, which includes teachers not responding, which is confusing as to whether they meet the criteria which is a weakness of this section. This data leads to confusion but if read mathematically soundly, the participants have met the 70%

Many letters of support are documented and complete which shows support of this program. The letters provided were not form letters and most appeared to be written individually which strengthens this application.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provided a high quality plan for its approach to engage and empower learners this is considered age-appropriate.

(a) (i) The on line student self assessment is comprehensive and complete with a plan for each student so that all students were included and accounted for which ensures that all students are being considered.

(a) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) There is a complete plan and rigorous implementation of all items under (a) with a plan for change as students grow and learn more about what they want to do. Each of these sections is addressed with a high quality plan in place. High Quality classrooms are described as well as strategies for high needs students. This section includes data and growth percentages that are feasible and rigorous in order to implement this plan. Specific assessments are provided in order to track progress of student growth. Mentors and internships are mentioned and described as ways to improve student learning and increase a positive environment for students and educators.

(b) (i) Students are being tracked for competency and not seat time which strengthens this plan. Students are required to provide performance based evidence of learning.

(b) (i) Performance based learning is included and expanded as an explanation for student growth. Students are working to mastery which is indicated.

(b) (ii) Description of high quality instructional approaches are vague although mentioned with a plan. The plan is not specific and does not include exactly what students/teachers will be implementing. Teaching is aligned to the current adopted documents.

(b) (iii) Internships and expert mentors strengthens this piece of the application with a connection to a personal portfolio with a mention of weekly student feedback.

(b) (iv) Personalized learning recommendations are vague but present which weakens this application

(c) Mechanisms for training and supporting students to ensure they understand how to use resources were varied and multi-tiered to include all types of student learners. There were digital and non-digital means of training students. There were three tiers of growth listed which strengthens this application.

The timeline was clear and achievable

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This application presented and adequate plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment so that all students are supported to be college or career ready.

(a) (i) Student support strategies are present and expanded upon which strengthens this criteria

(a) (ii) Specific strategies are mentioned as well as the implementation of these strategies which is a strength of this section.

(a) (iii) teacher training for use of data is mentioned and defined and feasible which is a strength

(a) (iv) Teacher and Principal Effectiveness using evaluations is vague with no clear descriptors of how this will be implemented.

(b) (i) The implementation tools for teachers is vague and does not provide enough evidence of connection to the goal or how specifically those goals will be attained. Statements are made about training teachers but nothing specific is mentioned as to how or when or for how long which weakens this application.

(b) (ii) The training mentioned to provide support that is vital to carrying out this plan is vague and unclear

(b) (iii) Specific training is not yet present at the time of this application which weakens this application

(c) (i) The three track professional development plan strengthens this application by relating this teacher training back to student achievement.

(c) (ii) All pieces of this criteria are mentioned and spoken directly about with slight weaknesses around specific trainings

Big Picture training is mentioned as a tool for training principals but no details are given and this piece is unclear as to how this will be done.

(d) there is a plan in place that is doable with three tracks mentioned and clearly defined as to how teachers will get and give data to students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant did not present a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructures.</p> <p>(a) Staffing consultants as a way of providing support is clear and present in this application and allows all schools to support this application with training and services provided to all teachers. There are no protocols for LEA's which is unclear how this connects to the plan and there is no information on how decision making is happening within the LEA's or among the LEA's.</p> <p>(b) Performance pay and multi-year contracts supports the ability to make decisions and strengthens their case for providing autonomy over schedules and calendars because this gives the district the ability to implement this program but it is unclear how this will be accomplished with no clear plan stated in the application.</p> <p>(c) (d) Mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple ways is mentioned which is needed but with unclear specifics as to how this will be implemented in all schools with all students. It sounds visionary but lacks clarity. Resources and instructional practices mention training and is not specific and clear</p> <p>(e) There is a mention of ADA but no clear pathway to make this happen depending on the different types of 504's or IEP's.</p> <p>This is not a high quality plan.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is not a high quality plan based on the criteria.</p> <p>(a) Student and parent support and access are clear evident and feasible with a mention of an on line data system, which makes the information available to anyone with internet access. There is a lack of evidence for educators and other stakeholders having access to necessary content, tools and other resources both in and out of school.</p> <p>(b) Schools are listed but with little evidence of exactly what each microclimate may or may not need in terms of having technical support.</p> <p>(c) Information technology systems are present and available to parents and students which strengthens this criteria.</p> <p>(d) Goals and rationale is weak with a mention of data systems but no clear way to tie them to each school or each student or each parent.</p> <p>(d) How stakeholders access information from outside the system not addressed</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is an adequate quality plan with weaknesses in implementing rigorous continuous improvement that provide timely and regular feedback.</p> <p>Regular feedback is implemented in this plan with no clear way to revise</p> <p>Tracking progress is implemented in a timely manner. Stakeholder groups are discussed as well as Data Coordinators and how this team is designed to make real-time decisions.</p> <p>Specific feedback implementation was not specific. Process evaluation is spoken about and has specific targets as to what</p>		

will be addressed and who will be addressing them.

Progress-based evaluation is mentioned but only vaguely tied to the application and would have been strengthened had specific feedback around specific content been mentioned.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Shared goals and information was clear and specific and represents a high quality plan which meets this criteria. A plan for ongoing communication through annual program overviews with monthly and quarterly plans to communicate with the various entities involved in implementing this program. Specifically what will be communicated is clearly defined in this section.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 This application presents ambitious yet achievable performance measurements and provided a rationale with a plan for continuous improvement.
 Tables are clearly defined and data is implemented with a plan for reporting information
 Students are broken down into various sub groups with each having a clear goal of achievement

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 This applicant had a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the proposed project.
 Interconnected data systems tracking progress strengthens this application
 Research questions are clear and concise with a detailed method of communicating the findings to all stakeholders.
 Data table clearly provides information about data being taken and the goals of this program and its effectiveness.
 The mention of an external evaluator using qualitative and quantitative data was vague and weakened this criteria because it was not clear what exact data was going to be evaluated.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 (a) Budget is complete with explanations that explain all funds and how they are being used. There were several categories that were vague, such as supplies and an example would have strengthened this category.
 (b) this budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support this project with sustainability after the funds are used.
 (c) (i) all funds are accounted for and (ii) all those used for one-time investments are addressed.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 This application is not clear how sustainable this will be without funds since most of the money goes toward contracts which are people implementing the project.
 The application mentions the sustainability, but not what happens specifically when money from the grant is spent. So the sustainability does not appear sound with no clear plan

The sustainability is mentioned in the budget with no clear details of what the program will look like after the grant is completed

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This application has an adequate plan with missing information to be ranked high in the competitive preference priority category.

- (1) Clear partnerships are present and strong as evidenced with all the letters of support.
- (2) Not more than 10 population-leveled desired results are present and spoken to. These included high risk youth with absenteeism issues and students with families that are identified as needing services. Each group was broken down into subgroups as required.
- (2) (a) The strengths of this application are in the program and defining partners and students sub groups which are all present in their plan and described in some detail with services that are defined and clear
- (3) (a) Tracking data for all students in improvement is in place and strengthens this criteria for the application. Students will be required to do a survey in order to get data and then track progress.
- (3) (b) Identifying needs and assess of the school and community is clear and a strength of this criteria. Specifically RDSS and ETO systems are mentioned and explained.
- (3) (c) Lack of information on specifically how this program will be expanded and modeled over time is a weakness. Exactly how this program is going to be improved upon over time would have strengthened this application. A statement that PEARLS was designed with the intent of scaling was mentioned but not expanded upon.
- (3) (d) There is a lack of clear explanation of improving results over time with a vague plan of how this will be done and no specifics. Examples of a vision of how to improve results or how the district would attempt this would have strengthened this application. Meetings are mentioned but there is vague reference to how this will improve results over time.
- (4) Lack of specifics on what partners are addressing specific student behaviors or how these plans get implemented is vague. There is a table with various partners mentioned with only a few specifics on what these partners will be doing to impact specific student behavior.
- (5) (a) Assessing the needs and assets of participating students as defined is clearly explained and how this will be implemented is clear.
- (5) (b) Identifying and inventorying the need and assets of the school and community are clearly stated and explained.
- (5) (c) A decision-making process and infrastructure is mentioned but not clear as to how this will be implemented and evaluated when addressing the needs of each individual students.
- (5) (d) Engaging parents and families is addressed with a clear plan in place to include families in decision making and improving results.
- (5) (e) There are goals in place for assessing the progress of this plan in order to maximize the impact of the plan.
- (6) There are no baseline data on many of the deliverables which indicates that there is no measurement tool available to measure progress. This lack of information weakens this applicant's response.

Deliverables in this application was weak and not clear throughout this plan which makes this an adequate plan instead of a high quality plan.

No baseline data on many of the deliverables which indicates an adequate but not high quality plan

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This application addresses learning environments that are designed to improve student learning as well as community outreach with college and career ready goals. This application addresses how it will build on the 4 core educational assurance areas as well as how they will build learning environments with personalization for teachers and students. Some of their plans are vague such as specific data that will be collected around student, teacher, principal, and program growth with missing data around baseline information. This plan is feasible and attainable with a budget that will support the implementation. This plan is not a High Quality Plan based on the data that is missing. This plan is rigorous and relevant according to the application criteria.</p>		

Total	210	147
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Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0034AZ-3 for Maricopa County Education Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1)(a)

- Although the four core educational assurance areas are addressed, there is little or no evidence that the vision builds on its work already done in those areas.
- The plan gives examples of why charter and other schools have failed to work for this population, but no examples of successes upon which to build are discussed.
- Standards for assessments to prepare for college and career have been adopted, but schools have not been required to use them yet (effective September 2013).
- While a data system has been envisioned, and its concept is outstanding, it is not yet operational, and there is no evidence upon which to build. The application states that it has been "imagined", indicating that it is still in its conceptual stages.
- The teacher assessment program is still very new and there is no evidence that it has been successful.
- Finally, the use of Big Picture Learning shows success in other schools and there is evidence stated that it would be effective with this population.

(A)(1)(b)

The goals and objectives are clear and support the project for the most part:

- The implementation of an internship program will accelerate student achievement
- Student learning will be deepened by a personalized learning program where students articulate their strengths and interests
- Personalized student support will be available through social services and wrap around services

However, the goals and objectives do not specifically address increasing equity

(A)(1)(c)

- The classroom experience for students and teachers participating in the program is articulated well and covers all areas for students as well as teachers. Many services would be provided and they are described well. The classroom experience would be very individualized and tailored to the students' needs.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The process of selecting schools to participate was based on the eligibility criteria in the competition. Memorandums of Understanding were signed by each of the participating schools.
- High need students will be served and the LEA's approach to selecting students based on high needs will enable it to effectively serve that population and implement its proposal
- The list of schools that will participate in grant activities is complete, and each school has the population described
- Total number of participating students from each group requested is listed as well as participating educators
- the applicant has a quality approach to selecting schools, students to participate and has done a good job of explaining how the approach will be implemented

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The management plan is structured in the format required of a high-quality plan. The plan is a quality plan, but has some weaknesses.

Plan weaknesses:

- The rationale for the activities is not clear for any of the activities listed, and instead appear to be activities themselves rather than rationale
- The logic model and Management Plan (two separate documents), are not linked in any way, and the Management Plan does not list the goals that each of the activities will help to achieve

Plan strengths:

- Key goals are listed clearly
- The use of Big Picture Learning, LLC ensures that the project has qualified and experienced staff implementing and ramping up the implementation
- The activities to be undertaken are clearly described in the Management Plan
- Timeline and deliverables are reasonable and credible
- The parties responsible for implementing the activities are listed and are reasonable
- Milestones are measurable and help to track progress
- The plan to make RDSS data systems available to non participating schools, specifically statewide, as well as making PEARLS personnel available for program implementation and audit services outside of participating schools is impressive

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

10

1

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)(a)

- State ESEA targets are not given - as a result it is not possible to determine if the vision's goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets
- The data provided for the assessment of each grade (10-12) for Reading and Math AIMS is not broken down by subgroup
- Math percent passing AIMS grades 11 and 12, increases from 18.19% to 92% and 11.58% to 92%, respectively, are ambitious but probably not achievable
- Reading percent passing AIMS grades 11 and 12, increases from 39.69 to 95% and 38.48% to 95%, respectively,

are ambitious but probably not achievable

(A)(4)(b)

- SY 2012-13 data is not available - therefore this portion has not been responded to

(A)(4)(c)

- SY 2012-13 graduation rates are not available - applicant is non-responsive

(A)(4)(d)

- College enrollment rates for SY 2012-13 are not available - applicant is non-responsive

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)

- Evidence for each LEA is not included or demonstrated - the evidence provided only includes 8 of the 20 LEAs included in the proposal
 - student achievement for Blueprint and Hope High Schools shows improvement over 4 years
 - Career Success Schools cites changes in principals as the reason for the inability to track data, although state achievement data should be available
 - Career Success data does not span 4 years
 - Chandler Unified shows improvement over 4 years in percentage of 10th graders passing the AIMS Reading
 - Chandler Unified's AIMS math data does not show improvement over all 4 years
 - Intellischools' data for number of suspensions does not show evidence for each of the 4 years
 - Although MCRSD shows improvement, data is not provided for four years
- None of the data provided addressed closing achievement gaps
- None of the data provided addressed high school graduation rates or college enrollment

(B)(2)(b)

- The applicant was non-responsive to this portion, referring the reader to (B)(1)(a), which did not address or provide evidence of ambitious and significant reforms

(B)(2)(c)

- Although most LEAs have elected to make parent and student connections to grading system online available to students and parents, not all of the LEAs in the application do so. Some use mail report cards and weekly reports. All data is available upon request. This is adequate.

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

- Although there is evidence that expenditure data is provided at the LEA level, there is no evidence that this information is provided at the school level.
- The information is provided for all LEA-level instructional and support staff, but there is no evidence that it is provided for instructional staff only or teachers only, as required
- Although it is transparent in that it is easily and readily accessible on a website, which is linked to from LEA websites, there is no evidence that it is provided at the school level - only at the LEA level.
- There is evidence provided that there is a high level of transparency in the LEA processes in that it makes financial

information available on a website annually to the public. However, the level of data is only at the LEA level, not at the school level as required.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence that the LEAs have autonomy under Arizona state law to implement personalized learning environments.

- Each local school board has the autonomy to implement state standards using their own customized plans, as evidenced in Arizona Constitution Article 11, Section 2
- Teacher and principal evaluations, under statute mandate, are to be implemented using local evaluation instruments as evidenced in ARS
- Personalized learning environments, through the "Move on When Ready" legislation, allows LEAs to issue diplomas to students they deem college ready through mastery of academic material. Local boards are also given authority to issue credits based on completion of subject area course requirements or competencies through project based learning and CTE course completion

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

15

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)(a)

- There is evidence that all stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the development of the proposal in a meeting at each LEA. The input received from surveys and discussions was categorized and used to revise the proposal

(B)(4)(a)(ii)

- The evidence is unclear about the percentage of teachers that support the proposal - it states "Survey results indicated that out of 129 teachers who responded to the survey, 83.7% of teachers support implementation of PEARLS. Out of all teachers, 61% of teachers support implementation of PEARLS". It is not possible, based on this evidence, to determine if a minimum of 70% of teachers support the proposal

(B)(4)(b)

- There is an abundance of letters of support from parents, students, business community members and other leaders. They are all favorable and very supportive.

There was meaningful stakeholder engagement - businesses, local governments, state government, teachers, students, and administrators were given the opportunity to provide input after they were presented with the project's ideas. They were asked to submit letters in support of or that contained suggestions for changes. They were given the opportunity to complete surveys.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)(a)

A high quality plan includes key goals, the activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan. The applicant's plan to implement and measure the success of these elements is a high quality plan. It includes all of the elements of a high quality plan and is credible. Evidence of this includes a table with activities, timelines, deliverables, the parties responsible. Some evidence of the plan's credibility include:

- Students will use surveys and student polls, complete personalized learning plans and have customized schedules

as well as intensive advisement

- There are timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for implementing. Evidence of the credibility of the plan include internships, project-based learning, performance based assessments and
- Personalized learning plans help students monitor goals and progress toward college-career readiness
- Students choose their ways of learning key concepts and academic material through project-based learning, online learning and/or internships
- Students complete interest inventories to help them choose an area of interest
- Students have exposure to careers in their communities and opportunities to pursue internships
- Students work with mentors and receive wrap-around services to help them develop skills and traits to deal with goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving

(C)(1)(b)

- Student learning plans are based on students' interests, students have access to customized learning schedules and options for instructional delivery
- Students have access to online learning, classroom learning and/or internships
- Relevant, rigorous instruction and project-based learning that aligns to ACCRS is provided
- Students have access to high quality content from Content Management System delivered through Learning Management System on tablets or facilitated by classroom teacher
- Ongoing, regular feedback is received from teacher, advisors, workshop teachers, online course facilitators, peers and mentors. In addition, parents and students have access to RDSS to generate reports, input data and take assessments
- Assessments are given and students' personalized learning plans are reviewed to make adjustments to plans when necessary for students to meet college and career ready graduation requirements
- All services will be modified to meet the accommodations for high-need students. The strategies for doing this are high quality

(C)(1)(c) Although the plan is high quality and all of the required components have been addressed above, there are no mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Management plan for developing highly effective teachers and leaders has all of the components of a high quality plan - rationale, activities, timeline, deliverables and parties responsible. There is a high quality approach to implementing the plan.

(C)(2)(a)

- **School staff engages in training that supports their individual resources and receives four years of professional development from Big Picture Learning. This professional development includes Personalized Learning Series, Leading Series, Learning Series and Standards Series as well as training for implementing Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards.**
- **Teachers and advisors participate in group professional development, sharing best practices and having open discussions**
- **Project-based units will be customizable to equip teachers in differentiating for the collective of individual needs of their students**
- **Content management systems will give teachers access to a wide variety of resources including video,**

online, supplemental and other curriculum resources

- **A system of data dashboards will be developed that will give students, teachers and parents up-to-date information about progress toward the student's individual goals and activities in meeting the college- and-career-ready standards as well as improvement and acceleration of student progress**
- **Teachers will receive coaching and feedback relative to the evaluation system from principals; principals will receive coaching and feedback from field specialists. Field specialists will assist all in understanding how the personalized learning objectives crosswalk with the evaluation system**
- **Teachers will be trained in the effective use of data to inform instructional decisions. Advisors will be trained in how to guide student conversations in relationship to the data**
- **Opportunities for all educators to improve their effectiveness, using data from the educator evaluator systems, to become highly effective. Performance improvement plans will be initiated for educators that are deemed ineffective.**

(C)(2)(b)

(b) through professional development over a 4-year period, through Big Picture Learning, all participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements - there is evidence that

- (i) Students will be involved in conversations about their progress as reported in data that teachers are trained (by principals) to access and interpret
 - (ii) Big Picture Learning professional development, over 4 years of training, will provide teachers with resources and tools, including digital resources and tools to create new content-based instruction to ensure that students are on track to be college and career ready
- However, there is no evidence of
- (iii) processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

(c) The training, policies, tools, data, and resources part of the plan, as well as their availability, have strengths and weaknesses:

- (i) All performance data for teacher, administrator and principal evaluations is available as part of the Arizona Department of Education's Instructional Improvement System. Performance ratings, by rubric, are available online for supervisor reports to be accessed and used for individual performance improvement. Individual educator goals will be developed as part of this system
- (ii) There is no evidence of training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. Only individual educators' plans for continuous improvement is presented - continuous improvement of school progress and closing achievement gaps is not mentioned

(d) The plan for increasing the number of highly effective teachers and principals, and thus the number of students that receive instruction from them, is a high quality plan. The plan includes professional learning for teachers and administrators, assessments and the use of these assessments and evaluations to devise development plans for educators, professional development for educators to develop and design lessons and assessments aligned to the state standards. The plan's implementation is well documented, and the goal clearly states that "100 percent of students will have access to highly effective teachers and principals by 2017"

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. No high quality plan was presented to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

- **The consortium governance structure, as identified in the notice, is not clearly addressed and is missing such components as**
 - (1) The organizational structure of the consortium and the differentiated roles that a member LEA may hold (e.g., lead LEA, member LEA) are not clearly identified;
 - (2) For each differentiated role, the associated rights and responsibilities, including rights and responsibilities for adopting and implementing the consortium’s proposal for a grant; was not included
 - (3) The consortium’s method and process (e.g., consensus, majority) for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) was not included in the application
 - (4) The protocols by which the consortium will operate, including the protocols for member LEAs to change roles or leave the consortium was not included;
 - (5) The consortium’s procedures for managing funds received under this grant - although the fiscal agent was named, the management of funds was not included;
 - (7) The consortium’s procurement process, and evidence of each member LEA’s commitment to that process was not included.
- Although school leadership teams are given sufficient flexibility and autonomy, there is no high quality plan showing the implementation of such
- (Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic is discussed, but there is no high quality plan for its implementation
- Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways is addressed and the narrative appears to be effective - however, this was not presented in the form of a high quality plan
- Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners was addressed in the narrative, but no high quality plan was presented

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

10

2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not have a high quality plan to support personalized learning.

Specifically, the plan is missing

- project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.
- how students, parents and educators will have access to necessary content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school. There is no high quality plan outlining the implementation of the data system.
- no evidence that the data system will be available to students and parents.
- The applicant addresses the implementation and availability of a longitudinal data system that contains assessment

- and personalized learning data,
- The applicant discusses how training and technical support will be available to educators
- There is evidence of information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems were discussed

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The management plan for (E)(1) covers all of the required components of a high-quality plan. However, there is no evidence of a rigorous continuous improvement process. Only the minimum requirements are met in regard to timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals. There is no discussion of how the applicant will publicly share information on the quality of its investments. The plan is lacking in rigor and has important components missing to be able to meet the requirements of this criteria.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has submitted a management plan for the establishment and implementation of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The management plan meets all of the criteria to be considered a high quality plan, as the following evidence shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports will be published online • Quarterly meetings with stakeholders will be held, during which feedback and opportunities to make adjustments will occur • Learning and implementation teams will hold regular meetings • Student performance presentations will be hosted annually for the public • An on-site coordinator will be assigned to each LEA 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The required performance measures do not, for the most part, contain required baseline data, specifically for sub-groups. Therefore, the applicant is deemed to be unresponsive to this aspect of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "increase the number of students making progress on the state assessment..." does not give specific measures for each year. • Objective 2.3 states that 100% of student will experience deep, personalized learning through internships, yet the performance measures states that 80% of students will complete an internship. • Also, by 2017 100% of all continuing teachers will be highly effective - there are no performance measures against which to measure • It is not possible to determine if the performance measures are ambitious yet achievable due to the fact that there is missing baseline data • There is no evidence of how the measures will provide information for improvement over time 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has responded to this portion of the application with a management plan that includes all components of a high quality plan.</p>		

The effectiveness of investments, such as technology and Big Picture Learning, are assessed through feedback, pre and post assessments, and results seen in student performance through the use of these investments.

- All steps of the management plan list specific responsible parties
- Activities in the management plan are all listed and aligned to the specific goals
- The data system(s) to be used for each component of the evaluation is listed

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(1)(a) The applicant does not identify all funds that will be used to support the project - if there are no external funds, the applicant should have noted such</p> <p>(F)(1)(b) The applicant's budget is detailed and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal</p> <p>(F)(1)(c) (i) There is not a description of al of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, so the rationale is undeterminable. There is no evidence that the applicant provides a thoughtful rationale of all of the funds</p> <p>(F)(1)(c)(ii) Social workers, instructional coaches, Positive Behavior Intervention Support, Project Director Field Specialists, Data Coordinators and Standards Continent Coordinators are all listed as "one time expenditures - not needed after the 4-year grant period". It seems unlikely that the program will be able to continue after the 4-year period without these support staff people to sustain it</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The managemen plan, while it contains all of the components of a high quality plan, does not include support from State and local government leaders or a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The applicant has identified resources and partnerships, such as MYTAC and Juvenile Transition Team, which will strengthen the program and provide social supports to students and families. However, as required in the application, this was not in the form of a high quality plan, which includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.</p> <p>(2) Although the applicant lists performance measures, there is no baseline (the response says "to be collected"). Therefore, this portion did not meet the requirements and is considered to be unresponsive</p> <p>(a) The applicant does not discuss all of the indicators when stating how it will measure the results - it only speaks about the Arizona At Risk Survey. In addition, this is not in the form of a high-quality plan. The plan refers the reader to the TJST org chart, but that does not discuss how the indicators will be measured.</p> <p>(b) Since it is unclear which data will be collected to measure the results of the indicators, other than the Arizona At Risk survey (which does not measure all of the indicators), the applicant did not address how the data will be used to improve results for all of the indicators. In addition, the response was no submitted in the form of a high-quality plan.</p>		

(c) The strategy to expand the services beyond the participating LEAs, into other alternative high schools in MCESA, and using an internal advisory team, are sound strategies. However, the strategies were not presented in the form of a high quality plan, which includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

(d) A plan to improve results over time was presented, but not in the form of a high quality plan, which includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

(4) There are many partners that would provide social, health, and other services within the schools. The plan to integrate these services into the schools is not in the form of a high quality plan.

(5)(a) Only one assessment is included in the plan to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports, the AZYAS, which does not appear to assess all of the needs of students. This plan was not presented in the form of a high quality plan, which includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

(5)(b) The plan to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant is not in the form of a high quality plan and is lacking in evidence

(5)(c) Although an advisory team and coordinating council will be created, their decision-making powers are not discussed. The decision-making infrastructure is not discussed. None of the plan is in the form of a high-quality plan.

(d) While the application addresses parents being part of the decision-making process regarding their individual students, it does not address how parents will be involved in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs. It is also not in the form of a high-quality plan.

(e) Although student achievement data and program evaluations will be collected routinely, there is no high-quality plan to assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

(6) The applicant only identified assessments that will be used and services that will be provided - it did not identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- Personalized learning will take place through the implementation of an internship program.
- Educators will receive extensive professional development over a four-year period, improving teaching and learning by personalizing the way education and content are delivered to students
- Students have various ways to prove competency in education areas, deepening their understanding
- Big Picture Learning, a contractor, will provide extensive professional development, implementation of data systems for teachers and educators to use in improving the education of all students
- Teacher and administrator assessments will be implemented and/or strengthened so that all students will have access to highly qualified teachers and educators
- The project's services and strategies are aligned with college and career readiness at both the state and federal levels

Total	210	122
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Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0034AZ-4 for Maricopa County Education Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

By articulating a clear and comprehensive overall vision – PEARLS will accelerate student achievement and improve teacher and leader effectiveness in alternative schools across the county - for their project, the applicant addresses this criteria to a high degree. They -

- Demonstrated an understanding and appreciation for the needs of the disengaged and at-risk high school student population they have identified to serve;
- Created a consortium of charter and alternative schools to increase individual school capacity and numbers of students served in 5 cities surrounding Phoenix;
- Augmented the stated AZBOE requirements for alternative schooling by targeting resources and supports through the RTTD initiative; and
- Planned to assist the participating LEAs in developing commonly shared and reliable approaches and strategies to enhance educator capacity and increase student success in meeting college and career ready standards.

MCESA, as a regional service center, has a demonstrated a strong track record in:

- providing training on AZ’s College and Career Ready standards,
- implementing notable TIF 3 and TIF 4 grants requiring the development and support of educator evaluation systems that include classroom observations and a sophisticated data management and instructional improvement (targeted professional development - REALize Decision Support System)
- brokering the engagement of Big Picture Learning to “reengineer” learning via personalized learning environments for students attending the 22 targeted schools.

(a) Each of the four core education assurance areas are discussed in detail, demonstrating the applicant has an understanding of the element and strategies either in place, or envisioned as to how best the achieve a favorable outcome.

(b) This track record, combined with new partners and resources, provides a strong indication the applicant is qualified to ensure successful achievement of their four goals(1. Students will master college and career standards; 2. Students will be engaged personalized learning; 3. Students will have access to effective educators; and 4. Students will receive wrap-around services. The goals, presented in chart form, are fine-tuned with by two objectives and aligned performance measures. The narrative then describes in yet more detail, the specific activities envisioned to achieve the goal. For example, the goal to engage students in personalize learning will provide relevance, relationships, supported by data systems and tools to support educators to individualize instruction.

(c) Because these are alternative schools serving students who have not succeeded in traditional classroom environments, MCESA describes a highly personalized approach. Students are assigned a teacher advisor who stays with them throughout their school enrollment and oversees the students development and execution of their learning plan.

Teachers will be supported with professional development in project-based unit planning, data literacy, internship coordination and career and academic counseling.

The applicant offers a detailed description of strategies and supports that will be made available to students in support of individualized learning, all of which combined, provide a high potential for goal attainment.

- participation in online coursework, workshops and seminars;
- assignment of a teacher advisor for the duration of their enrollment;
- opportunities for pathways based on credit attainment needs
- wrap-around services in support of social, health, housing, etc. needs for students and their families and behavior intervention (PBIS);
- individualized curriculum based on needs and interests;
- internships that offer authentic learning opportunities
- ready access to data to monitor and track progress by faculty and students.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant meets this criteria to a high extent by describing both their approach to implementation and the process used to identify the participant schools.

An internal Advisory Team has been formed with high level decision-makers who will oversee project start-up until staff are hired, then continue to provide oversight. An organization chart for the PEARL project depicting key leaders and the staff teams who will report to them.

by which the MCESA Youth Transition Advisory Council was formed, who, in turn, established an initiative (ITJST) to serve at-risk youth. Of the 97 schools in the county, 22 alternative charter schools across 10 LEAs met the RTTD criteria. Section (B-4) specifies how the LEAs were informed of the RTTD criteria and actively participated in the initiative design.

Applicant further specified that 5 LEAs committed all of their schools, with 5 LEAs using the PEARLS model.

The applicant meets the minimum student participation requirement (2,000-5,000) by projecting a total of 2,961 students, 66.5% of which are identified as low-income will receive support through the grant.

Applicant included the required school demographics table listing the 22 participating alternative charter schools detailing the grade span, student totals and low income percentages that again show student and LEA criteria met.

Weakness

The reference to how the 5 remaining LEAs will benefit from participation was vague and from the table it is unclear which LEAs have included all of their schools and which only a few.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A qualified MCESA Internal Advisory Team has been identified and is in place staff with high-level and experienced decision-makers that will be necessary to kick-start the project (if awarded).

The Applicant’s high-quality plan for LEA reform was reasonable and demonstrated a convincing capacity to manage a large scale consortium project. Notable is the understanding (as outlined in the plan) that:

- each LEA must examine their mission and values and worked toward a shared vision
- an audit of LEA strengths and weaknesses and support systems is necessary to diagnose current needs

and required interventions and supports

- build trusting relationships with outside consultants, service providers among school staff and students
- obtain and upload requisite student, educator and project data into aligned and upgraded systems
- adapt learning systems to meet student needs

A logic model is included that specifies 6 core components that address RTTD requirements, activities for each component and clearly state the desired outcomes (Goals and objectives).

A feasible plan to support improved student outcomes was provided noting the need to improve and upgrade LEA data systems for collecting and reporting student data. Also evident was the understanding that changing state assessments will require recalibrating of baseline performance.

Scale-up opportunities are feasible given MCESA's role as a regional service center able to allow/support "other" schools within participating LEAs and other LEAs to:

- opt-in to the date infrastructure built thru the grant
- assistance with audits
- participation in internship and wrap-around support offerings through a new "internship center" and PEARL staff resources

Weakness

The logic model, as presented, does not convey a logical theory of change in that the items listed as components are in essence outcomes, the goals and objectives stand alone and do not appear to be linked to the activities. Logic models, if well designed, tell the story for a project – e.g. if we do this, include these resources and activities, we can expect these interim results and eventually these final outcomes, that of - All students will be engaged in personalized learning.

While the applicant states that a staged implementation over a three year period is necessary, it is not clear how the "artisanal approach" will work with one school at a time – 22 schools – and continue momentum of providing services to students scheduled to begin May 2014. A "schedule" for engaging or activating services in the schools was not outlined in the plan.

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

10

5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Student achievement data (when available) was clearly presented with targets established throughout the grant period and beyond. Sub-groups with an identified comparison group were delineated.

Annual goals for improved student learning overall appear achievable and realistic, e.g. a gain of 4-5 percentage points (75- 79 AIMS math grade 10).

The capacity of the applicant to obtain achievable results for improved student outcomes through the proposed partnerships, interventions, supports and activities is convincing.

Weakness

State ESEA targets were not listed so therefore difficult to know if goals and targets will be equal or exceed.

2012-13 baseline data was not provided for AIMS math overall and subgroups, or graduation rates.

The stated or desired gains for subgroup gains to close the achievement gap, given the high-risk targeted student population, appear overly ambitious. A gain for special education from 27 to 44 percent passing or Hispanic 55% to 70% passing on the AIMS assessment does not seem realistic.

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	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The challenges that alternative schools encounter in documenting student success is clearly stated.

Applicant provided some evidence of positive gains in student learning indicators (GPA, suspensions, GED, course completion) for 6 of the 10 participant LEAs.

Four years of documented student growth for tenth grade reading and math AIMS data overall was provided for one LEA – Chandler Unified.

The majority of the LEAs provide access to student performance data on-line or through mailed reports. The schools that mail weekly reports and hold face to face parent conferences offer an alternative for families that do not have ready access to technology and an effective way to engage parents of the dis-engaged students.

Weakness

The applicant provided insufficient evidence that the partner LEAs or participant schools had a four year track record of advancing student learning. In only one instance was four year AIMS data for high school students shown. (Note: Southwest Leadership Academy began Fall 2013)

It was not clear if charter schools or alternative high schools are exempt from statewide testing as a possible reason for the lack of trend data.

(B)(1) (b) No evidence that the LEAs have achieved significant reforms or improvements in student learning in their alternative schools was presented. Information about current or past efforts with school-based improvement programs and strategies to support implementation of student learning indicators (attendance, course completion, GED attainment, etc.) was not discussed.

Given the high at-risk nature of the targeted student population, providing on-line or web-based access to student performance data for parents (the majority of whom are likely disengaged in their student's education or lack internet access) is an ineffective strategy.

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

5

1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant states that the State of Arizona requires all LEAs to submit Annual Financial Reports to the state and provide a link to the website. The report details teacher and instructional support salaries and the related costs to school level expenditures.

Weakness

The proposal narrative notes that while LEAs are required to report each school's current expenditures for classroom instruction, they may exclude classroom for administration, student support services and operations in the school report cards. This would appear to limit transparency and therefore not adhere to criteria (B)(2).

No example or document was included as evidence of transparency in the appendices.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a climate and cites the Arizona constitution wherein the state and a public school system have a shared responsibility. The state provides guidelines, frameworks, standards yet allows LEAs a sufficient autonomy to determine how to:

- assess student competency and demonstrate mastery through both standard student assessments of learning and performance-based proficiency.
- assurances for developing highly effective teachers and leaders
- effective uses of data
- support to struggling schools and students, and
- implementation of the CCSS.

Additionally, they note that charter schools and alternative high schools have additional leeway to provide innovative approaches to individualized learning.

Specifically, the state, as a RTTT state, has in place core assurances (bulleted below) that benefit the PEARL LEAs and are required of the RTTD grants. For each of these components, the applicant cited the related legislation, code or BOE regulation, and provided commentary on how each LEA or the service center have adopted or been guided by the state requirements. For example, "each PEARL's district has adopted an evaluation model (educator effectiveness) in alignment with the SBE framework."

- an educator evaluation system for developing effective teachers and leaders
- Common Core state standard adoption with assessments (AZ College and Career Ready Standards)
- A statewide longitudinal data system that links student-teacher ids and course completion and related dashboards
- Rigorous curriculum frameworks
- Required Education Career Action Plans supported by a career information system (AZCIS)
- Local definitions of student competency and proficiency towards rigorous standards

The last element is particularly supportive of PEARL LEAs and schools in their quest to design personalized learning environments for highly marginalized youth in need of alternative learning environments. It permits LEAs to create new pathways to graduation beginning in 2012-13 by allowing local boards to issue credits based on course completion or demonstrated competency against learning objectives.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provided a detailed description of a robust approach to informing and obtaining stakeholder interest and buy-in to the RTTD grant. Initial meetings with surrounding LEAs documented interest in the opportunities afforded through the grant – such as:

- A common data system
- Internship development and coordination
- Wrap-around services
- Professional development for staff and
- Accessibility to an integrated curriculum and assessments.

This wish list was further convincing by the Design Support Survey wherein the majority of respondents indicated the design components were perceived to be “effective” and “very effective.”

The feedback collected from students, teachers, community organizations and education leaders was captured from a series of 6 meetings and sorted by common strategies and specific activities that individual schools could consider.

As there is no teacher bargaining, 129 teachers responded to the survey out of a possible 177.

The applicant provided numerous letters of support (appendix). They demonstrated thoroughness in their outreach by soliciting letters from an array of stakeholders - state political leaders (Senate and House of Representatives, state superintendent, partners, social service and youth serving organizations, students and parents. In addition to supplying the actual letters, the proposal narrative cited key supporting phrases from the letters bolstering the impact of their stakeholder outreach and engagement.

The applicant met the requirement to seek the input of the appropriate political decision-makers (state superintendent and 5 city mayors). These letters are included in the appendices with replies and documents that this requirement was met.

Weakness

In reporting teacher survey percentages, it appears only 61% of the teachers support PEARLS implementation rather than the required 70%.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has offered an ambitious yet thorough approach to ensuring <u>that learning approaches engage and empower</u> the participant students. Students, their parents, teachers and community mentors, as the learning framework is envisioned, are seen as resources and facilitators in support of a rigorous and personalized program of study. As such, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Develop their own learning plans • • Establish key project goals, timelines and milestones • • Work toward achieving grant benchmarks (assessments and gateways) that measure achievement toward college and career readiness • • Engage with diagnostic tools to inform career and content interests • • Take on increasing responsibility for managing their learning • • Participate in real-world learning projects, internships that are relevant and build requisite skills for workplace and post-secondary contexts. <p>The internships are to provide real-world relevancy for learning and a deep learning experience that supports career exploration. Through the internships, students will have opportunities to experience diverse contexts and be challenged to apply their academic skills to solve problems and communicate solutions.</p> <p>Determination of student's <u>skill development and mastery of content</u> depends on some form of assessment. PEARLS students are allowed to demonstrate mastery through a variety of measures, some formal others self-defined. Each emanates from their personalized learning plan. The applicant specifies a reasonable assortment of formal and informal assessments that are recorded and managed by a sophisticated data management system flexible enough to accommodate the variety. Students working with their teachers, mentors and counselors customize student learning and related assessments. Such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual administration of PLAN, EXPLORE, ACT, AIMS and PARRC to determine mastery of standards • Evidence portfolios and quarterly/annual exhibitions that demonstrate project-based learning outcomes, • Access to direct instruction or tutoring with a teacher (modeling curriculum for core science and math subjects and on-line courses • Use of digital content for course delivery accessed thru computers or tablets • Weekly feedback meetings with advisors and internship mentors • Reports generated by the learning management system. <p>The applicant appropriately understands that students, their teachers and parents will need training in order to manage their learning plans and data that is generated to diagnose and monitor their learning, achievements and goal attainment. They describe a 3 tier support system that includes direct training, video tutorials and a help desk.</p> <p>Applicant provides a comprehensive and reasonable plan that aligns with the described strategies for improving student learning and in support of the project's three student learning goals. The plan outlines specific activities, milestones, timelines, intended outcome and responsible parties.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>It is difficult to discern the "reason" in the plan's rational statements which are more declarative than explanatory.</p> <p>Specifics as to how students will be recruited, screened and placed into internships is not discussed. Nor how business or community partner internship openings and opportunities will be generated, and intern supervisors understand and support the project's goals, intended outcomes and the individualized learning needs of their student interns. This strategy is a critical component to PEARL, yet no plan or activities have been provided to ensure this has been carefully thought through.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Building staff capacity while implementing a new improvement initiative is arguably the most difficult aspect of educational change management. The applicant has two benefits in their favor:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An experienced provider/partner in personalized learning – Big Picture Learning, and 2. An established state supported educator evaluation system supported by noteworthy TIF grants managed by the MCESA. <p>(d)The detailed Management plan for developing highly effective teachers and leaders was comprehensive and contained the requisite information of a rationale (note earlier comment of rational statements) descriptive activities, intended outcomes (deliverables) realistic timelines and responsible parties. The plan included 5 key foci that by supporting the development of teacher capacity will increase the likelihood that more students will receive instruction from high quality teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increased educator effectiveness with data systems that monitor student progress in becoming college and career ready · Ensure curriculum and instruction align to college and career ready standards · Increase educator effectiveness for implementing personalized learning · Develop educator capacity to develop instruction and assessments · Provide differentiated options for professional development that both improve effectiveness and assure retention <p>(a)Role specific training for designated staff who will in turn train and support teachers and principals in curriculum design, project-based units and data entry, management and interpretation through the content and learning management systems.</p> <p>(b)Teachers, principals and field staff will provide coaching and feedback to their direct reports to support understanding an how to use data to implement personalized learning. Teachers will work within communities of practice to analyze data and reports to interpret the best approaches to meet student needs</p> <p>(c)An extensive description of the educator evaluation system that emphasizes professional growth plans and school improvement plans to improve practice, refine school learning environments and ensure that students have access to highly effective teachers.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>The applicant seemingly glossed over the availability or allocation of set-aside time for provision of the extensive and required professional development for building staff capacity thereby ensuring sound program implementation.</p> <p>Not discussed in this section was the extent that teacher learning would focus meeting each student’s academic needs, interests and optimal learning approaches by adapting and content and instruction, initiating progress based learning. The use of tools and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements was not discussed (only various forms of data).</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>PEARLS provides ample flexibility, yet consolidated services that facilitates personalized learning and achievable project goal attainment.</p> <p>(a) Applicant described the composition and role of the project’s Coordinating Council that provides adequate oversight and feedback to monitor project goals and challenges. MCESA as the fiscal agent will be responsible for hiring and managing project staff. The staffing appears adequate to support effective implementation and necessary support to each school.</p>		

(b) Each school has the autonomy to develop individualized plans allowing for customized approaches to student learning, staffing contracts and budgeting informed by ready access to a robust data management system should they opt into the available systems.

(c) (d) By participating in PEARLS, all schools will have access to competency based assessments in addition to their multiple school-based approaches to ensure multiple ways for students to demonstrate content mastery and course competency.

(e) The applicant assures that all digital resources are ADA compliant and learning content will be accessible and students and teachers will receive training on the technology accomodatoin features and that other resources will address each student's learning needs and accommodations.

Weakness

No high quality plan was provided to support the applicant's rational and describe the activities, timeline and responsible parties that would facilitate personalized learning.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described in detail the data management system that would more than adequately support the data management needs project overall and individual LEAs and their participating schools. Available to all schools as an opt-in (and therefore interoperable) are four data management systems – Educator Observation and evaluation, content management, learning management and assessment system.

The Data Systems Implementation Plan indicates that the RTTD resources will be used to support the LEAs and schools to create an interoperable data system. The initial steps, as outlined in the plan, will be to establish contracts to access the Realize Decision Support System (RDSS), then train teachers and key staff to load the data, customize fields and reporting, and provide PD on how to monitor and report student progress, service delivery and effectiveness.

Weakness

Not described was how participating students, parents and key stakeholders could assess the systems (content, tools, and learning resources) in and outside of the school setting. Also unclear is how students and parents could export their information in a usable format while protecting student privacy.

Also, no high-quality plan was provided that included these criteria.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant appropriately integrated evaluation into their continuous improvement process framework. The process includes both formative and summative review of programs, processes and outcomes guided by thoughtful questions.

Key project personnel have been assigned oversight responsibilities for collecting and analyzing performance data (Data Coordinator), fidelity of implementation (Director of Research and Project Director).

A management structure (Coordinating Council, Internal Advisory Management Team Project Director, LEA Leadership Teams) is in place to ensure the reviewing, re-configuring and reporting of program progress, lack thereof and lessons learned are disseminated to inform school level implementation.

The applicant included a concrete plan that included the requisite components (rationale, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible party). The plan is inclusive and outlines steps to measure, monitor and share a rigorous continuous process and is designed to work together with the program's evaluation plan.

Weakness

Not discussed in this section was how the applicant would share information about the quality of the investments such as professional development, technology and staff. The applicant stated "more detail on out-comes based evaluation is provided in E4. How the applicant will monitor and measure the quality was not found there.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Communication Plan is anchored on three critical focus questions that explore "to what degree" the program impacts the programs core components.

Effective strategies for disseminating information to key stakeholder groups was discussed – websites, summaries, focus groups, surveys, report findings, press releases, data keyed to need specific timelines – monthly, quarterly, annually. Also included were considerations for sharing with a wider community of other LEAs, states through a PEARLS website, on-line library, publications, videos and social media.

The Project Director will have responsibilities to communicate this information to various stakeholders including:

- maintain program information, progress and stories from the field on the MCESA website,
- develop annual program reviews to share project plans and activities
- provide monthly updates on data findings, stakeholder focus group/survey findings to stakeholders,
- quarterly report to all LEA leaders, principals and Coordinating Council summaries and adjustments to mangement plan, and
- annually report progress towards performance measures on-line, and disseminated by web, e-mail to all stakeholders and schools outside fo the PEAALS alliance

A quality communication plan included the activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties who were responsible for reporting the information to be shared.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

MCESA has proposed 16 ambitious (given their student population) yet achievable performance measures overall and by subgroup that align with their three student learning project goals. They stated they determined the measures based on their appropriateness in alternative settings in addition to summarizing the thinking behind each.

In most instances the desired gain or growth is in manageable increments e.g. 3% for credits earned, between 4-5% for percent passing AIMS math, 2% gain for graduation rates.

Also included (aligned with a fourth project goal) are two measures for student access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The proposed continuous improvement planning process is thorough enough to identify lagging indicators in order to revisit and revise as needed.

Baseline data:

Teacher and leader effectiveness by sub-group and ELL submission of FAFSA is not currently tracked does not iconvey an assurance that the data would now be collected. Whereas, all other measures, where baseline data was not available stated, "to be collected."

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MCESA plans to engage an external evaluator to manage the program evaluation. The evaluation design as presented is of high caliber (quasi-experimental using control groups and inferential statistics and hierarchical linear modeling) and will

definitely pinpoint variables associated with inputs and resulting outcomes.

As previously described, MCESA has or will develop access to multiple sophisticated interconnected data systems (SLDS, AzCIS, AELAS) that have the capacity to generate relevant data to inform the research questions and assess progress towards program goals, objectives, milestones and performance measures.

As stated, the focus of the evaluation will be to "evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD investments. The Evaluation Plan is of high quality and is anchored by the four program goals with two objectives, activities that support the objectives, suggested milestones and the data system that would provide the relevant information. The plan further indicated the various parties that have the responsibility to track and monitor progress and support the evaluative process.

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>MCEAS presented project budgets that were logically aligned with five program design components. Staffing, technology supports, supplies and consulting costs noting one-time or ongoing costs were clearly delineated.</p> <p>Specified costs for personnel, technology and consulting services are reasonable and sufficient to support project development and implantation.</p> <p>Weakness.</p> <p>For a \$10 million dollar project, a part-time evaluator at \$40,000 per year is not adequate to support the rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation design. A Director of Research is proposed to lend their support to the grant, but their role was not discussed so it is difficult to assess if their participation will increase the level of effort required.</p> <p>No budget narrative was provided for Budget Table 1-1 to explain the reasoning for the projected costs and how they rolled up from the project based budgets.</p> <p>The applicant did not indicate if other funds such as state RTTT, district (local or grant), foundation or CBO would be used to support implementation. It would seem likely that organizations hosting interns would be contributing both in-kind and direct resources to project implementation.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It is conceivable that with a highly successful project and realized outcomes, the charter and alternative schools will continue to attract students and their families and thereby increase their enrollments. Increased enrollments translates into additional state and local funds granted per student thereby providing an income stream.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>Sustaining any federally-funded project beyond the end date is challenging, especially for school districts whose funding is largely static. Therefore, a sustainability plan dependent on partner schools and districts to assume the grant provided staff support for social workers, instructional coaches and high need support such as student internship transportation is not a potentially sound plan.</p> <p>Additionally, putting stock in the project being able to leverage state funding may not be a "likely possibility."</p> <p>The narrative states that a move toward sustainability is realized by annually decreasing requested grant funds. This may be true overall, with YR 4 representing a \$975,000 decrease from YR 1. The majority of staff salaries and related fringe, however, increase over the four year grant making the project personnel heavy, rather than providing opportunities for local districts to begin building in similar staff roles into their local budgets.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>MCESA formed a collaborative of community and youth service organizations - TJST(Transforming Juveniles Through Successful Transition)- to support schools (traditional and alternative) who do not have the capacity to serve highly at-risk youth. This collaborative partnership of 83 members representing 49 agencies is bound by formal structures and more than meets the competitive priority criteria for a “coherent and sustainable partnership to offer wrap-around support services.</p> <p>CP 2 is met by the reiteration of 5 performance measures that are consistent with their proposal outcomes and address either an education family and community result. The previously described inter-related data systems, especially the Efforts to Outcomes system, provide adequate assurances that progress will be tracked and relevant data accessible to target resources where needed. The four project social workers and Data manager will be key to managing the referral and coordination of resource access and monitoring results.</p> <p>MCESA, being a regional service center with faceted partnerships and inter-agency relationships is well positioned to scale up the model to other LEAs and schools. Transfer of know-how and capacity occurs through shared opportunities for training and knowledge transfer that the collaborative and service providers are able to provide.</p> <p>MYTAC formalized operational structure, coupled with PEARLS Internal Advisory Team and robust data management systems will facilitate communication and tracking of their joint efforts and results over time.</p> <p>(4) Table 23 provided ample evidence that wrap-around services are already offered to students and their families in several of the partner schools. Through PEARLS, additional outreach and coordination will expand the client base and broader provision of need-based services.</p> <p>(5) MCESA described four strategies that creatively meet this criteria for providing both school and partner staff with the necessary tools and training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Shared training opportunities for educators and community-based partners will facilitate understanding of each other’s cultures, success indicators and most effective interventions; · GIS mapping will assist partners in identifying appropriate referral services for students, families and schools; · Administration of the AZYAs to all PEARL students will offer increased and enhanced data about their needs across 7 domains to facilitate case planning and service referral; and · Having organizations/staff that parents already know and trust will encourage their active participation. <p>Weakness: Weakness</p> <p>The description of MYTAC did not indicate when the collaborative was established or offer examples of their record of success.</p> <p>CP (5)(a) did not specify which staff in participating schools would be trained and who would provide the training on how to assess, evaluate and address principles of criminogenic need and risk.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Maricopa County Education Service Agency, with its 10 LEA partners and 22 participant schools has proposed a thoughtful, comprehensive and coherent RTTD proposal. The design builds upon successful reform initiatives aligned and supported by both the state’s RTTT work and the in-place capacity of the service center.</p> <p>Woven throughout the proposal is specific information and high-quality plans as to the rational, strategies and activities that will be developed or enhanced to support an at-risk and marginalized student population to meet the four core educational assurances.</p>		

Total	210	136
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