



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0201CA-1 for Parlier Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>6</b> |

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has set forth a reform vision, however a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests is lacking. For example, regarding a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, the student proficiency component (section-e) under the 'Schools that Care' model, is unclear. The applicant describes companies that have created online assessment tools. It's not clear, however, how these assessments will align with the curricular focus, personalized learning environment, and student interests. The applicant describes only the utilization of tests, along with quizzes and exams. The applicant describes an analysis of wellness, including disciplinary data youth surveys, parental involvement surveys, English language acquisition, teachers/staff attitudes, and other factors. This focus seems potentially promising. More information on how the information will be collected and utilized would enhance this section of the proposal.

The applicant has described a reform vision with many components. This reform vision is aligned with the four core educational assurance areas described in the notice for the competition. The applicant has, for example, adopted standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace. The applicant's reform vision involves data systems that measure student growth. The applicant has focused their attention on low achieving schools. However, the applicant has limited information on how they will build on existing work in these areas. The lack of information on existing programs aligned with the core assurance areas is problematic. The applicant has stressed enhancing classroom rigor, and adopting the common core standards. More specificity regarding how the applicant plans to increase rigor, with personalized learning environments would enhance this section of the proposal.

The applicant did not provide adequate information on enhancing equity in this section of the proposal. More information on increasing equity, and individual tasks based on student academic interest would enhance this section of the proposal. An understanding of the classroom experience for students and teachers participating in a personalized learning environments remains somewhat vague in this section of the proposal.

The applicant has provided a reform vision with many interesting and innovative ideas. However, the proposal is lacking a comprehensive plan necessary to develop their reform vision. In addition, the applicant lacks detailed information on how the district will build on its existing work , regarding the four core assurance areas. The applicant provided a reform vision with an interesting set of ideas, however the applicant failed to adequately shape this reform vision into a cohesive and coherent reform vision consistent with the intention of the competition. For this reason, the applicant scored in the midrange.

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| <b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b> |
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant states that all schools in the district will participate in the project. The process used to select these schools was not specified in this section of the proposal. From this section of the proposal, it's unclear if all participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The applicant provided a table with data indicating a high percentage of high needs, economically disadvantaged, and underserved students.

The applicant reports negotiating an agreement with a prominent energy provider to incorporate a comprehensive education program into a forthcoming districtwide solar/alternative energy program. The applicant has provided a list of schools that will participate in grant activities. The applicant has listed the total number of students targeted by the project. In addition the applicant has provided a table including the total number participating students, participating students from low income families, participating students who are high need, and the participating number of educators in the district. The applicant has documented serving a high number of high need students as consistent with the intention of this competition. According to the documentation provided, the selected schools meet the eligibility requirements.

It's unclear from the proposal how the agreement with a prominent energy provider is consistent with a personalized learning environment.

Adequate detail is not provided, to support the applicant selection of this service provider, or this focus in a manner that supports high-quality level school level implementation.

Because this section of the proposal included the necessary documentation on the selection of schools, data on the students served by the proposed project, and documented a high need consistent with the intention of the competition, the applicant scored in the high range for this section of the proposal. The applicant did not receive the full amount of points possible in this section, because of the lack of information on the selection of participating schools, and the connection of this service provider with the intention of the competition.

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

**10**

**6**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has received grants to improve schools. The applicant describes the initiatives of this competition as aligned with school improvement projects they have implemented. The applicant provides some information on this alignment. For example, a college readiness program with partnerships with a nearby college and university.

The applicant has linked scalability to an environmental center where students will produce solar energy panels. The applicant believes the solar energy panels will provide a scalable reservoir of data for students in neighboring districts to collect and analyze. The applicant lacks specificity on how the reforms proposed in the competition can be scaled to neighboring districts. Although the sharing of data is positive, there is a significant lack of information on how reforms will be scaled up and translated into districtwide change beyond the participating schools. The applicant has budgeted a technical writer who will develop an implementation manual for helping other school districts.

The applicant received points for indicating some potential for scaling reforms beyond participating schools. However, the applicant failed to provide a high-quality plan describing how the broader scope of the reform proposal might be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform beyond participating schools. The applicant did not provide a significantly developed logic model or theory of change for how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by this proposed project. For this reason the applicant scored in the midrange.

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

**10**

**6**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has established goals for improved student outcomes consistent with the intention of the competition; and the applicant has provided information on improved student learning outcomes targeted by the proposed project. For example, the applicant has provided a logic model detailing needs, barriers, objectives, evidence, as well as short-term and long-term outcome measures for student outcomes. There are logic models presented for personalized learning environments, and the STEM center. These include goals for achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The applicant has also provided a logic model for a “community as educator” program, data-driven professional growth, and fidelity, success, and sustainability. The applicant has included a timeline that enhances this section of the proposal. However, it's not clear if the logic models have adequately identified the correct needs. For example, the applicant suggests that there is a lack of positive engagement and interest among parents in their child's life. However, no evidence is provided to suggest this is an accurately identified and targeted need. The lack of information supporting the identified needs on the logic models make them questionable as part of a vision likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

The applicant has established a vision to improve student learning and performance. The applicant has disaggregated data among subgroups related to the aim of decreasing achievement gaps. However, in the area of college enrollment rates, the applicant lacks 2011/2012 baseline data. The applicant reports that not enough students with disabilities graduate yearly to comprise a statistically meaningful population when measuring their college enrollment rates. The applicant does not provide any information on resolving this issue, nor do they further clarify the issue. These factors make the applicant's vision to improve student learning problematic, and is partly why the applicant scored in the midrange.

The applicant would enhance this section of the proposal by demonstrating evidence for the targeted goals. In addition, more detailed information connecting sections of the logic model, such as the needs section with the barriers, short and long-term outcomes would make the model more convincing in the extent to which the specified goals seem ambitious yet achievable. The lack specific information in the form of a plan to decrease achievement gaps among special needs students is problematic.

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

|   | Available | Score     |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant reports a high need, including having 94% of students eligible for the federal free/reduced meal program. The applicant reports increasing its academic performance index measured by the state. The applicant reports students making advancements in mathematics. The applicant reports positive graduation rates. The applicant references partnerships with a local college, and upward bound program which seems positive. The applicant reports a fairly significant changes at two of its persistently low achieving schools. These schools were awarded large-scale school improvement grants in 2011. These schools are beginning the second year of the implementation of reforms. Data on improvement does not appear available at this time, or was not included in this section of the proposal. The applicant has referenced an emphasis on professional development indicted language acquisition.</p> <p>This section of the proposal had many positives. However, certain information is lacking. The section of the proposal is lacking a clear and comprehensive reform plan to increase the utilization of student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. A clear record of increasing equity in educational outcomes is insufficiently described in this section of the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant documents some progress. However, the applicant does not adequately document four years success. The applicant is lacking some data relevant to the intention of the competition. In addition, some data is labeled incorrectly; specifically table A-2, and A-3 are incorrectly formulated. The applicant lost points for this reason, and others previously mentioned. Because data on improvement was not available or included, and given that some data was incorrectly stated, the applicant lost points on this section of the proposal. However, the applicant documented making changes at low performing schools, and referenced some positive partnerships. For these reasons, the applicant scored in the high midrange for this section of the proposal.</p> |           |           |
| <b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>   | <b>5</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Information regarding this section of the proposal is very limited. The applicant states that they provide salary information to a local newspaper, which then publishes the salaries of all individual staff members on a website. The applicant has not included any steps to foster a higher level of transparency regarding instructional supports, pupil support, and school administration. The applicant did not provide adequate evidence of a high level of transparency regarding practices, investments, and how to increase public access schoolwide expenditures. For this reason the applicant scored in the low mid range for this section of the proposal. More detailed information on increasing transparency of processes, practices, and investments would enhance this section of the proposal. More information regarding school level expenditures from state and local funds would have also enhance this section of the proposal.</p>   |           |           |
| <b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| <p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant believes that they have the conditions necessary for reform. They rely on some existing structures. For example, the applicant states that to monitor student achievement with respect to its major subgroups, they will rely on an existing student information system. The applicant reports that the district will utilize regulatory provisions in place as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant used this section of the proposal to detail accountability systems according to the state, and federal government. However, information on the conditions and sufficient autonomy under state requirements needed to implement personalized learning environments is unclear from this section of the application. The applicant reports, for example, only that the state Department of Education refused to review the application as a matter of state policy. Due to lack of information on sufficient autonomy necessary to implement the learning environments consistent with the intention of this competition the applicant lost points on this section of the proposal. However, the applicant did provide information on state codes that allow for flexibility for the proposed plan. Because the applicant appears to have some of the conditions necessary for reform, but did not clearly specify if they have the autonomy necessary to implement personalized</p>   |           |           |

learning environments, the applicant scored in the midrange on this section of the proposal.

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>12</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided detailed information regarding meaningful stakeholder engagement in support of the proposal. For example, the applicant reports holding a two-day colloquium with the community with a presentation on the requirements of this competition. Reportedly, there were post session discussions among stakeholders. The applicant discussed engaging an external consultant from a private company to guide efforts toward developing a teacher evaluation system. Reportedly, teachers and the faculty association president along with board members, parents, and administrators were present. The applicant reports efforts to create a fair and equitable process of effective representation among stakeholders. The applicant reports a strong system for review of current goals based on data. The first section is based on observation. The second is focused on the collection of artifacts. The third section based on assessments. The fourth component is based on professional learning communities. And the fifth section based on professional conduct. The various components appear to be waited fairly evenly. In addition, the various areas provide a more dynamic range of assessment.

The applicant reports union representation for teachers. The applicant also noted that each year the school board and superintendent meet with union representation to review data and progress. The applicant has included letters from local organizations centered on youth development. In addition, the applicant has provided letters of support from the Mayor, director of early care and education, a national youth center, and the chief of police for the district Police Department.

The applicant did not receive a perfect score on this section, because information on how feedback was utilized in the development of the proposal was lacking. In other words, the applicant did not adequately address how the proposal was revised based on engagement and feedback.

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

|                                    | Available | Score    |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>7</b> |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant is lacking a coherent and comprehensive high-quality plan to improve learning and teaching for personalizing the learning environments. For example, it's unclear from the proposal how the agreement with a prominent energy provider is consistent with personalized learning environments. Adequate detail is not provided, to support the applicant's selection of this service provider, or this focus in a manner that supports high-quality level school level implementation. The applicant describes a personalized learning environment focused on real-world STEM problem-based learning. The applicant has described a project centered on alternative energy sources. This makes it unclear as to how the project will align with student centered interest. The applicant suggests that the program will serve as an ideal curriculum for the personalized learning environment, however specificity is lacking. It's unclear from this section of the proposal how students' personalized interest will be incorporated within the program.

Aspects of the proposal are vague and unclear, and therefore inconsistent with a high-quality plan. For example, the applicant included a photograph of a walking trail at the environmental center, which the applicant claims illustrates various opportunities to learn STEM lessons, with lessons tailored to students' personalized learning plan. However, it's unclear how a walking trail will contribute to personalized learning, and rigorous STEM lessons.

The formation of real-world science laboratories sounds promising. However, the strict focus on solar energy panels seems potentially limiting in the context of personalized learning. It's unclear from the proposal how faculty will tailor solar energy panel data collection to meet the interests of various students.

The applicant also suggests that employees and partners contracted through the alternative energy program will attend classroom presentations, participate in career days, and attend career fairs. It's not fully clear if their inclusion is intended to provide career pathways for jobs. More information on this arrangement is needed.

The applicant reports there will be opportunities for professional development related to personalizing learning environments. The applicant notes the utilization of academic coaches who receive professional development. However, details of this professional development for

personalizing the learning environment are lacking in specificity.

The applicant notes utilizing cross curricular instruction, which seems promising. For example using math to engage students in music. Again, however, more information is needed.

The applicant notes development of personalized learning plans, which function similarly to individual education plans utilized in special education. The applicant suggests however that they will incorporate a deeper metacognitive approach to learning. This system seems potentially promising, however specificity is lacking. The applicant does not present a comprehensive and coherent high-quality plan to utilize personalized learning plans. More details and specificity about how the plan will work, how students will utilize it, how teachers will be trained to guide the process, and details of how the plan will operate are necessary to enhance this section of the proposal.

The applicant has addressed the issue of exposure to diverse cultures through internet access. It's unclear why an applicant in a fairly populated location chose to utilize the internet for this goal. Details on how students will utilize the internet to gain exposure to diverse cultures is lacking.

Details on how students will be prepared in relation to college ready standards are lacking in the proposal. For example, there is no clear indication that students' instructional content for skill development will lead toward college ready standards. Any information on advanced placement classes, college preparation courses, SAT/ACT preparation would enhance this section of the proposal.

The project-based learning component of this plan seems potentially promising. However, the focus primarily on training for jobs in alternative energy is problematic. Details on how projects might vary, be multidimensional, or incorporate a wide range of students' interest is lacking.

Because the applicant is lacking a coherent and comprehensive high-quality plan relevant to this section of the proposal, this section was scored in the low mid range.

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

**20**

**14**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided some information regarding teaching and leading in relation to personalized learning environments. For example, the applicant has developed personalized learning communities to monitor adherence to professional development. The applicant references academic coaches to train classroom teachers to provide technical assistance to students, and content knowledge aligned with career and college readiness standards.

The applicant reports involvement in professional learning communities for teachers involved with this program. The applicant suggests that the team leader will be trained by an alternative energy provider, and a learning management system provider. These individuals are described in the proposal as consultants. However, it's unclear where these individuals will be hired from and what their credentials are.

The applicant reports use of a third-party provider of longitudinal data. Courting to the applicant teachers will have the capacity to share data and collaborate on providing solutions. Participating community-based organizations have reportedly also agree to use the longitudinal data system.

According to the applicant professional learning communities will provide a vehicle for collecting data used for individual teacher's formal evaluation, as well as disseminating feedback for teachers to improve their effectiveness. This approach seems problematic. It's unclear how the applicant will encourage feedback data in a system designed to utilize that information for formal evaluation. It seems that the formal evaluation component would bias or alter the potential for useful feedback data. In other words, why would someone report negative feedback data when that information might be held against them in a formal evaluation? Perhaps this is not a problem, but the dynamics of the program are not sufficiently detailed in the proposal.

The applicant reports utilizing a longitudinal data system related to learning styles based off of surveys from trained education psychologists, previous performance on state assessments, disciplinary records, record of cognitive disabilities, and personal interviews with the student's parents or guardians. This information will be used to draft personalized learning plans for each student, therefore, it's unclear why students' academic interests are not included within the information system. It's unclear why student strengths course history, and other factors are not included.

The applicants plan does not sufficiently articulate an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students, in particular high-need students. For example, it's not clear why an alternative energy provider will train team leaders. The training by the learning management system provider seems more relevant and potentially promising for high needs students, but this connection is not adequately addressed. The applicant does indicate that all

participating educators will engage in training, and in professional teams or communities. However, it's not sufficiently clear that these training will support their individual and collective capacity to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments, adapt content and instruction, frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, and improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback. The applicant indicates that all participating educators will have access to tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. However, it's unclear the extent to which educators will have actionable information to identify optimal learning approaches, high-quality learning resources, and the processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches. This stems from an unclear connection between the alternative energy coursework and personalized learning throughout the proposal. The applicant has provided information suggesting that participating school leaders and school leadership teams will have the training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. However, it's unclear that educators will have the training, policies, tools, data, and resources for information from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system needed to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness, and training systems to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. In short, the applicant has a plan for increasing educator effectiveness. However, the applicant is lacking a high quality plan to sufficiently increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. For this reason, the applicant scored in the midrange.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

|  | Available | Score     |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |           |
| <p>The applicant has a plan to support project implementation through policies and infrastructure that provide students and administrators with the support and resources needed. For example, the applicant has provided specific details on a consortium, and its administrative hierarchy. The applicant reports that they will establish a consortium management office to support the initiatives of this competition during the capacity building phase, grant period, and beyond. This appears to be a promising strategic approach. The applicant has provided an organizational chart adapted for the program. The applicant states that a project director will oversee the entire project. The applicant does address the need to alter current structures to establish personalized learning environments. The applicant reports the willingness to implement performance-based accountability systems. The applicant has addressed the long-term accountability to both students and educators. The applicant reports that they will incorporate new policies and procedures that will prevent barriers for students advancing when mastery is displayed, as well as ensure that students have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery. The applicant has developed a plan to facilitate educator evaluation in a manner that will inform personal decisions, enable students to network using mobile devices, and facilitate the use of technology to engage students outside of the school day, or to organize instruction in alternative ways. These factors appear promising. More specific details on these factors would enhance this section of the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant has established a plan that focuses on practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. The applicant met the criteria for this section by having organized a consortium governance structure to provide support and services to participating schools. For example, they established a "Race to the Top – District Consortium Management office" to build capacity during the grant period. The applicant met criteria for this section, because they provided information on school leadership teams in participating schools. The applicant received points for this section because they focused attention on giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. For example, they are working to implement performance-based accountability systems and policies to ensure that the conditions for continuous improvement are in place so that learning can be customized.</p> <p>The applicant received points for providing information on the governance structure necessary to provide support and services to participating schools. In addition, the applicant received points for indicating that school leadership teams in participating schools would have the flexibility and autonomy necessary. The applicant has provided information on allowing students the opportunity to progress by demonstrating mastery. The applicant provided information on learning resources and instructional practices that are accessible all students, including high need students. The applicant failed to receive the full amount of points available for this section of the proposal, because a comprehensive and coherent high-quality plan was not fully developed.</p> |           |           |
| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b>  |

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided a plan to provide students and educators with support and resources. For example, the applicant reports the personalized learning environments for this proposal are web-based and therefore require the use of computers. The applicant reports that very few students have a personal computer. The applicant has budgeted to purchase tablet PCs for students to borrow. The applicant has planned for third-party longitudinal data system provider to collect information on partners involved in the project, parents, professional development workshops, and other factors that seemed promising. More specificity and information would enhance this section of the proposal. In addition, any information that could demonstrate hard data on factors relevant to this section would enhance this section of the proposal. For example, any survey previously conducted on the number of students in need of personal computing devices would make this section of the proposal more convincing. In addition, surveys of parents prior to the submission of this proposal would enhance this section. The applicant has essentially developed a set of plans without a complete understanding of the situation. The applicant failed to provide a high-quality plan that would convincingly ensure that students, parents, and educators would have the appropriate levels of technical support necessary to support personalized learning. Because of the lack of complete understanding of the situation, the applicant scored in the midrange for this section of the proposal.

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The applicant has provided a fairly basic plan for continual improvement. The applicant also provided a fairly basic visual graphic focused on planning, training, and deploying, and monitoring. The applicant envisions these in a circular manner. Although the plan is fairly basic, it does seem fairly straightforward and reasonable. However, more specific information on methodology utilized to measure improvement would enhance this section of the proposal. For example information on specific statistical data collection, qualitative and quantitative data collection, and so forth would enhance this section of the proposal. In addition, there is no information on the persons responsible for monitoring different sections, and there is no clear timetable for the evaluation and improvement process. In other words, it's not clear how often implementation of the plan will be monitored directly through specific methodologies. Again, it's unclear who's responsible for the monitoring, and changes based on formative data. Perhaps an external evaluator would enhance this section of the proposal. The development of a more comprehensive evaluation and management plan would enhance this section of the proposal. In short, the applicant failed to provide a comprehensive and coherent high-quality plan necessary for a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on project goals. For the reasons mentioned here this section of the proposal scored in the low to mid range.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>5</b> |
| <b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The applicant has provided a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. For example, the applicant has detailed school board meetings where the agenda and minutes are readily available to the public, active advisory committees, a forum for parents of English language learners, and other public meetings. The applicant has sought to enhance its outreach to the local community through research-based community involvement plans. The applicant has developed a plan that involves external stakeholders including the mayor, the local city Council, Chamber of Commerce, local health centers, youth centers, and other external stakeholders. The applicant has provided specific information, including the names of individuals who will participate in internal and external stakeholder engagement. The applicant has provided a timelines and milestones chart in appendix-A that illustrates a method for installing ongoing communication and engagement. All of these factors are components of a high-quality plan. The applicant receive full points for this section by providing a high-quality plan for internal and external stakeholder engagement. The applicant engaged the local community. In addition, they have provided a method for ongoing communication and engagement.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The applicant received points for providing performance measures. However, the applicant did not receive full points, because they failed to provide a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve their plan. The performance measures did not have quantifiable measures that could be judged ambitious or appropriate. The applicant did not provide</p>   |           |          |

an adequate rationale for selecting measures. It was not clear that the measures will provide rigorous, timely, informative information tailored to the proposed plan. The applicant was lacking clear information on how they will review and improve the measures over time. For these reasons, the applicant scored in the midrange for this section of the proposal.

The applicant has provided a number of performance measures, and student outcomes. There is some information on who will oversee the entire project. At the school site level, the applicant reports using directors to oversee the involvement of the personalized learning communities in providing personalized learning environments for students. However, for this section there is not information on timelines when performance measures, and student outcome measures will be assessed. Is unclear who was responsible for collecting the data, and how the data will be utilized to affect change. The rationale for the selection of the measures is not sufficiently detailed. The measures that are targeted to not seem adequately connected, such that action based on implementation success is an area of concern.

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

**5**

**4**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the funded activities. The applicant has budgeted a professional grant evaluator to work alongside of a national evaluator, and the project director. This appears to be a fairly comprehensive and promising approach. The applicant provided areas of focus for the evaluator, such as the development of baseline measures, coordinating data, developing common data collection protocols, and developing staff training for data collection. The applicant has linked evaluation to a set of outcomes and indicators listed in the proposal. The applicant has developed a plan that allows for longitudinal data of students, schools, community planning, resource development, and so forth.

The applicant received points for having a comprehensive high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of investments, including the utilization of an external grant evaluator. In addition, the applicant reports the utilization of mixed method data collection and analysis. The applicant did not receive full points for this section, because they lacked adequate information on the evaluation timelines and the specific individuals responsible for reporting on various measures.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>6</b> |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided a budget, and budget narrative. The applicant has identified funds that will support the project. The applicant has also provided a rationale for investments and priorities, including a description of all funds that the applicant will use to support implementation of the proposed project.

Certain aspects of the budget were not adequately justified in the overall proposal. For example, the use of tablets were not adequately justified in the proposal. In addition, the cost of full-time technicians to develop the infrastructure necessary to support these tablets was not adequately justified in the proposal. The cost of the technicians is budgeted \$748,800.

The applicant focused on the refurbishment of an environmental center in the budget narrative. The applicant has noted a 50% match of all afterschool instructional teaching salaries.

Aspects of the environmental center are not completely supported in the overall proposal. For example, training stipends for professional development in alternative energy is not adequately supported in the proposal. It's not clear from the proposal that student interest is significant enough to justify the cost. Training stipends in alternative energy alone are budgeted at \$864,092 over a four-year period. Solar installation at the environmental center including equipment, zip lines, and a climbing wall are budgeted at \$1,449,292. These costs were not adequately justified in the proposal.

For an online personalized learning community the applicant has budgeted \$4,300,061. This includes a significant cost for iPad's, at \$540,000 in year one. The purchasing of iPads is not adequately justified in the broader context of the overall proposal.

The applicant received points for including a proper budget, and budget narrative. However, the applicant scored in the midrange for having a budget with items not fully justified in the broader context of the overall proposal, nor in the budget

narrative.

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

**10**

**7**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has included a plan for sustainability of the projects goals after the term of the grant. The applicant has provided information on state and local government financial support. The applicant has identified areas in which a drop-in expenditures will allow for certain aspects of the plan to be carried on beyond the fourth-year. Another promising aspect of their plan includes a train the trainer model for professional development. However, the applicant has not included a high-quality cohesive and comprehensive high-quality plan. For example, the applicant has focused on the perception of a long shelf life for tablets. The applicant here has identified 'Google Chromebooks', but identified iPads in the budget. Because the applicant provided a sustainability plan detailing decreases in contractual expenditures, they received points for this section of the proposal. However, due to the lack of a high-quality sustainability plan the applicant scored in the midrange for this section of the proposal.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>4</b> |

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided information on partnerships to address the needs of participating students. For example, the applicant is targeting teen pregnancy rates. The applicant has also established a set of partnership initiatives through Youth Centers of America. The applicant details in length the broad community efforts to organize various service agencies. These agencies were assembled by the broader community for the purpose of community redevelopment. However, information on how these agencies and this initiative is integrated with the proposal is left unclear. This section of the proposal would be enhanced by making a logical connection between the community revitalization initiative and the educational initiatives consistent with the intention of the competition. The applicant details the community right revitalization plan and then shifts to the topic of parent involvement. It's unclear if there is a connection between the community revitalization plan and parental involvement in academics. The applicant notes the development of a parent University, intended to engage parent involvement in school activities. Details on this model are not sufficiently specified in the proposal. The applicant budgeted for a Novelas Educativas program. This is for a nonprofit organization, that according to the applicant specializes in high-quality, entertaining video programs to address issues such as financial aid, and teen pregnancy. More information on how this nonprofit organization will foster the initiatives consistent with the intention of the competition would be helpful. The proposal is unclear on what videos would be produced, their purpose, and how they fit with the intentions of the competition. The applicant detailed a cultural sensitivity toolkit. To address cultural divisions between service providers and the local community. This approach seems like a potentially promising, and an important component for connecting the school and local service providers. However, details on how this toolkit would be used, the agencies it would be utilized with, and details legitimizing its utilization are significantly limited. It's not clear from the proposal exactly how the toolkit would be utilized.

The applicant has provided a theory of action framework connecting a community board, with the project evaluator community stakeholders, and others. The applicant asserts that this framework will enhance early childhood education, help create quality ineffective community-based organizations, support students and families, and create pathways the higher education. However, details on exactly how the theory of action framework will impact these areas, and specifically what exactly they are targeting is not adequately specified in the proposal. For example, explicitly specifying the exact service provider that will address a specific academic area would enhance this section of the proposal.

The applicant addresses data collection and analysis for the communities that care program. The applicant list a number of questions addressing issues like drug use and other high risk behaviors. This data collection questionnaire survey is paid for through an existing grant. Details on how this data is utilized, and how this utilization is consistent with the intention of this competition is not adequately described in the proposal.

The applicant reports that it adheres to a strict set of timelines and milestones with regular progress reports required. Listing a more detailed set of these timelines and milestones, and the progress reported on, would greatly enhance this section of the proposal. In addition, connecting these timelines and progress reports to the intention of the competition would enhance this section of the proposal.

The applicant reports that, that while the partnering organizations collect data on individual students, "not all partners collect the same data and their diverse formatting makes cross-partnership data analysis difficult and imprecise." The applicant has reported the intention to acquire the services of a longitudinal data systems provider. However, it's unclear from the proposal exactly what information can be provided by the system, and more importantly how this information can be utilized in a manner consistent with the intentions of the competition. In other words, how will this information be utilized to address the social emotional and behavioral needs for participating students?

This section of the proposal contains some potentially fruitful contributions to students and the community. However, this section of the proposal is lacking a coherent plan with specific information relevant to the intentions of the competition. For this reason, and other specified in these comments, the applicant scored in the low mid range for this section of the proposal.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

|  | Available | Score      |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b>   |           | <b>Met</b> |
| <b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>  |           |            |
| <p>The applicant addressed how they will build on the core educational assurance areas. For example the applicant has developed standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. The applicant developed these standards in their goals displayed in their logic models. The applicant has focused attention on building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. The applicant has focused on recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. For example, this is one of the applicant’s components for the “Schools That Care” model developed in the proposal. The applicant is also focused on turning around low-achieving schools.</p> <p>The applicant has provided teachers with information, tools, and supports necessary to address the needs of students. In addition, the applicant has focused these tools and supports one deepening student learning. The applicant has provided informational policies, systems, and infrastructure that has the potential to enable teachers and school leaders to improve individual student achievement, and potentially close achievement gaps. The applicant has placed the focus on equity and preparing students to master skills required for college and career readiness.</p> <p>The applicant has placed a significant focus on the implementation of district-wide personalized learning environment. The incorporation of an online learning management system that provides an accessible platform for student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and parent-to-teacher collaboration is consistent with a coherent plan to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies. In addition, the alternative energy installation, which according to the applicant is intended to provide real-world data for problem-based learning is consistent with the focus on deepening student learning aligned with the academic needs of individual students. The newly-adopted teacher evaluation system is consistent with the desired focus on increased effectiveness of educators, and exposing students to the most effective educators. The applicant has placed an adequate focus on increasing rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p> |           |            |

|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>132</b> |
|--------------|------------|------------|



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0201CA-3 for Parlier Unified School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b> |
| <b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The application directly addresses two of the four core educational assurance areas in its vision narrative. The project is described as having a professional development focus on the Common Core State Standards, with a large emphasis on</p> |           |          |

the collection and use of data as a leverage point in student achievement. A smaller focus on teacher/principal evaluation is noted, but the narrative does not discuss how that may be used to develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals. The vision as presented in the narrative does not address the core area of turning around low-achieving schools. The narrative provides a clear description of a teacher's life in a classroom under the personalized learning environment. As examples, teachers would participate in classroom observations, work in PLCs, and examine their own and other teachers' assessments, which currently is not done or not systemic within the LEA. The narrative is less clear on what a student would experience in the personalized learning environment. At the student level, the narrative describes briefly the alternative energy project, along with online collaboration tools. These are specific examples, particularly applicable at the MS and HS levels, but they are insufficient to address the total yearlong educational experience in a classroom for students, and the applicability at the ES level is not denoted. The narrative presents a unique set of strategies that should combine to produce an enhanced level of the enacted curriculum and subsequent higher student achievement, because they include professional development, examination of actual student work, classroom observation, and measurement of instructional quality. Overall, the evidence supports a rating at the lower end of the upper range.

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

**10**

**10**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The narrative clearly and completely describes the decision process to limit the project focus to students in grades 4-12, because the technology planned for the STEM alternative energy program is designed for intermediate level students and older. The narrative includes a list of all participating schools, the total number of students participating, the number of high-needs students, the number of low-income students, and the number of educators participating in the project. Overall, the evidence supports a rating at upper end of the high range.

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

**10**

**6**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to A3, with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. Some of the components of a high-quality plan are presented in the Logic Model (i.e., goals, activities contained in objectives column, deliverables contained in evidence column) and Gantt charts (i.e., timelines) for each subproject. However, neither of these provides information on the responsible parties for activities, and there is no alignment of activities linked to a specific goal, or deliverables linked to specific activities. In addition, the beginning and ending points of activities are not clear in the Gantt chart. For example, it is not clear if students visit the off-site solar education program just during the Oct-Nov time period or through May. The project includes all schools in the LEA, though not all grades (i.e., grades K-3 are excluded). The narrative notes that Parlier USD collaborates with several LEAs that are close in proximity, and suggests these other districts may want to adopt the applicant's personalized learning environment and alternative energy program. However, the narrative is not clear if this extension of the program to other LEAs is a goal of the project. Overall, the narrative does not provide all of the elements of a high-quality plan, and supports a rating in the middle range.

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

**10**

**8**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The application provides tables with yearly targets for all of the required areas: summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment. The yearly changes during the grant period are reasonable based upon the baseline data presented. For example, changes from one year to the next in percent of students proficient or above in math range from 3%-7%, a feasible increase based upon targeted project activities. In general, the goals are ambitious, as many of the targets in the final project year are double that of the baseline year (e.g., Language Arts baseline is 15% for English learners and year 4 target is 33%). The goals for each subproject are clearly presented in the particular Logic Model page. However, some of the information described in the narrative is not included in the application (e.g., Table A3 which is described as providing expected growth with a row labeled "accelerated"), or is not defined (e.g., the subgroup of SED students in performance target tables), which makes it difficult to determine if all of the presented data is reasonable and complete. Overall, the evidence supports a rating at the lower part of the high range.

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

|  | Available | Score     |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The application provides a narrative description of LEA performance on the state's academic performance index, student proficiency success, graduation rates, and school reform efforts. The data tables included in the application provide disaggregated results for a specific subgroup (e.g., economically disadvantaged or Hispanic or English Learners) on one particular subtest (e.g., math). The application does not provide a complete picture of performance for the LEA as a whole, for each specific subtest, that includes all students. Therefore, it is not possible to corroborate the assertion that the LEA has made significant gains in API over the past three years. Also, there are errors in Tables A2, A3, and A5, which change the performance picture from all positive values to a concern in performance of Basic level students, as three of the four tables show decreases over the three years shown. The application does not provide a clear record of success as four years of data are not included, as specified in the selection criteria. Neither does the narrative include information on college enrollment, which is a selection criterion. The narrative states that state data are included in Table A4c, and that the LEA graduation rate is higher than the state and county. However, that table does not include state graduation data, nor four years of LEA graduation rate data. Thus, it is not possible to determine if the LEA has a positive growth trend in graduation rate, and that they are above State levels. The application provides evidence of reform activities in two persistently low-achieving schools, with significant changes made, including new principals and teachers at the schools. However, the narrative does not provide evidence of successful implementation and the positive impact of the reform (e.g., through data on student achievement increases, graduation rate, discipline, etc.). The narrative provides evidence that the state performance report is provided to parents, but does not indicate how the LEA acts to inform and improve parent participation. Overall, the application provides insufficient information regarding the LEA's track record of success, which supports only a rating at the lower part of the middle range.</p> |           |           |
| <b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The application does not provide the required evidence of school-level budget transparency. An example from the State website is provided in Appendix A which shows individual employee salary information. However, the narrative or Appendix does not state that any school summary information is provided or available to the public. Therefore, no evidence is provided in the application that the required four categories of school-level expenditures is made available to the public. The evidence supports a rating in the low range.</p>  |           |           |
| <b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The application denotes the LEA has a student information system that can provide collection and reporting of data elements including in the proposal to monitor student proficiency for project evaluation. The narrative describes the state assessment and reporting system, which provides additional data and analyses of student performance that are integral for monitoring the project status throughout implementation. Also, the narrative makes reference to State Education Code that allows LEA flexibility to implement personalized learning plans, collection of classroom-level data, implementation of an evaluation system to ensure high-quality teachers, and a cognitive approach to instruction. This is important because each of these are included in the proposal, so this is confirmation that the project activities will be permitted under State regulations. Overall, the narrative provides sufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the LEA has the autonomy and flexibility to implement the proposed plan, which supports a rating in the high range.</p>  |           |           |
| <b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The narrative provides some evidence of involvement by teachers and principals in development of the teacher evaluation system, which, as a part of the LEA project, will provide data to inform teacher and principal actions and plans. However, the narrative provides no evidence of stakeholder participation in the development of this proposal for personalized education. The proposal provides evidence of teacher support through the signature of the local teacher union president, but there is no other evidence of teacher support for the project provided in the application. A minimal number of letters of support (five) are included in the Appendix, will all of the letters exhibiting little personalization from the writer and a lot of elements of a form letter provided by the applicant to potential supporters. The application does not provide evidence of any support from a parent organization in the LEA. The evidence supports a rating in the low portion of the middle range.</p>  |           |           |

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

|                                    | Available | Score     |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>10</b> |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to C1, with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The application does provide a lengthy, 18-page narrative for the Preparing Students for College and Career: Learning selection criteria. The narrative provides an overview of what a student might experience through the project's personalized learning plans via the alternative energy education program. However, most of the narrative focuses on what teachers would be doing (e.g., professional development) in the project, with little on what the student would experience. For example, most of the discussion on the student's personalized learning plan is on the teacher's professional development and classroom observations, and not on how the student will create and use the PLP to achieve their own goals. At times the narrative is not clear regarding the project focus and the application's content, as statement are included about multiple LEAs, which adds a level of difficulty in understanding the narrative and the project's purpose (e.g., "all partnering LEAs involved in this project in the past have focused most of their attention..."). The project addresses exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives through stating all LEA residents will have access to affordable Internet connection, and all high school students will have their own wireless hot spot. However, it is not clear how just having internet access will expose students to beneficial and relevant diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. The narrative does not provide detail on how the project activities will motivate and deepen understanding through exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. The narrative is not clear about how the narrow focus of the project (alternative energy program) supports mastery of critical content and the broad range of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. The amount of time per day or week or month that students would spend on the alternative energy program is not provided in the application. Therefore, it is not possible to determine if the project would be able to address the wide range of content, skills, and goals envisioned for each student participating in the project (which is all students in grades 4-12). The narrative provides a thorough description of what might be included in a student's PLP, including results from benchmark and formative assessments, learning styles, and personal interviews. However, the wide ranging types of data formats, structures, and elements mentioned in the narrative calls into question the ability of a student information systems to handle both data collection and reporting aspects in a manner that assures the accuracy and completeness of the data and the usability of the information by students and teachers. The narrative states that "both LEAs" have student information systems capable of storing the data and generate reports. However, a PLP needs to be not just access to a myriad of separate pieces of data, but a reporting system that makes it easy to use. The narrative does not describe the PLP system or include information on how it will be developed, which makes it difficult to determine if the description of the project's PLP will become reality during the grant period. The application briefly notes that students will receive training in tools and resources from their teachers of record. However, there are no details provided on that process. Instead, the narrative focuses on professional development for teachers. Overall, the lengthy narrative provides a description of a comprehensive but complicated personalized learning plan structure which is based on a narrow-focused alternative energy project. The narrative does not include all of the components of a high-quality plan and sufficient details about a number of key usability issues of the PLP process, which supports a rating at only the middle range.

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

**20**

**7**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to C2, with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The narrative states that teachers will participate in professional learning teams, which will serve as a vehicle for technical assistance and implementation monitoring for the project. The narrative notes that teachers will receive a variety of PD activities through the teams: alternative energy; learning management; problem-based learning approach; guided inquiry; cognitive rigor; student questioning; classroom observation. However, the narrative does not provide details on how these numerous activities will be coordinated, managed, and presented in a useful, meaningful manner to teachers. This is critical to ensure fidelity of training of teachers and implementation of each of the particular strategies by teachers. The narrative is not clear on the frequent measuring of student progress in several ways. First, the narrative states that the longitudinal data system provides teachers in "all participating LEAs" to share data, even though the project is comprised of a single LEA. Also, the narrative does not describe what data will assess student progress and, more importantly, the frequency of data collection, which is a key to knowing students are on track and making modifications to learning plans. The narrative

repeats information provided in a previous section, stating the student information system will supply teachers with data on student learning styles, discipline, results of state and local assessments, and personal interviews. However, it does not address how all of this disparate information will be communicated in a useful and understandable manner to teachers to be actionable, which is essential to a personalized learning plan structure. The narrative denotes how data from the classroom observation tool, as a part of the district's teacher evaluation system, is a key strategy to monitoring teacher behaviors linked to effective instruction, such as assignment aligned to rigorous standards and academic engagement time. However, the presentation does not address how the project will increase the number of highly effective teachers in hard to staff schools, subjects, or specialty areas. Overall, the narrative provides a lengthy discourse on a large number of instructional and professional development activities in which teachers would be involved. However, all the elements of a high-quality plan are not provided, and no organizing, monitoring, and evaluating structure is described, which is an essential component of any project with numerous components like that denoted in this application. The evidence supports a rating at the lower portion of the middle range.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>7</b> |
| <b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The narrative does not include a high-quality plan with goals, with activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative describes a consortium structure to provide decision-making and governance for the project. An executive committee description is provided, along with an organizational chart for the consortium. However, it is not clear why a consortium structure is created, as only a single LEA is involved in the project (although a number of times the application references "both" LEAs). A table of administrative positions is included, with primary responsibilities, supervisor, and amount of time devoted to the project noted in the table. However, some of the positions noted in the table are not provided in the organizational chart (e.g., Implementation Committee Chair), and the organizational chart does not include complete lines of reporting or responsibility. The narrative states that the LEA will develop policies and procedures that facilitate personalized learning, but currently these do not exist. The absence of actual adopted policies in these areas (i.e., demonstration of mastery, use of evaluations to inform personnel decisions, access to the school's network using personal mobile devices, and use of technology by students outside the school day) is problematic because no timeline for adoption is presented in the application, and without these policies implementation of a personalized education environment under the RTTD grant competition is not possible. The LEA has adopted the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) for instruction of English Language students, and notes this system works with "Action Projects" and project-based learning for English learners. However, the narrative does not provide evidence that all teachers are proficient in and use the GLAD strategies, which is necessary to ensure that the project activities are accessible to English learners. Overall, the need for and structure of the consortium is not clearly presented, and policies and procedures to ensure implementation of personalized learning are not in place, and a high-quality plan is not provided, which supports only a rating in the middle range.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The narrative does not include a high-quality plan with goals, with activities specific to the particular goal, timelines that include month and year, deliverables for each activity, and responsible parties for carrying out the activity. The narrative states that the LEA will ensure that each student has access to a digital device for the project, and outlines the technology support available through LEA staff. However, it does not specify how the LEA will ensure that students and teachers have access to the digital tools, resources and content both in and out of school, which is a selection criterion. The narrative does not include information on 1) whether the technology system will allow students and parents to export their information in an open data format, and 2) whether the LEA and schools use interoperable data systems. Therefore, the evidence supports only a rating at the lower portion of the middle range.</p>  |           |          |

#### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>1</b> |

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to E1 (as required from the selection criteria), with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The narrative does not address how the LEA will monitor, measure, and publicly share information, but only outlines a generic PDCA process, which is inadequate to provide a clear and comprehensive description of rigorous process that produces timely and regular feedback on project implementation. Overall, the evidence supports only a rating in the low range.

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

5

1

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to E2 (as required from the selection criteria), with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The narrative denotes a few committees within the LEA (e.g., District English Language Learner Advisory) that meet periodically, but it does not describe or provide a plan for engagement and communication relative to this project. The evidence supports a rating in the low range.

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

5

2

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The narrative includes a table of 15 input process performance measures (and student outcomes) that are to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. However, these are not the performance measures provided in Table E3, which include the required targets for Highly Effective/Effective Teachers and Principals, College/Career Readiness, and FAFSA. The targets for each measure are reasonable and ambitious, with yearly increases of 2-5% from the baseline year, which should be achievable given rigorous implementation of project activities. The rationale for selecting a measure is provided for some measures (e.g., grades 4-8 student survey question), but not others (e.g., grades 9-12 college readiness), thus the narrative is not complete on Part A of the Selection Criteria. The narrative and tables do not explain why migrant and non-migrant students are listed as subgroups, as information about migrant students in the LEA is not provided anywhere else in the application. It is not clear why the tables for Highly Effective and Effective Teachers/ Principals, College/Career Readiness, and FAFSA include a statement regarding a rise in student population across "both districts" when the project is confined to a single LEA. Similarly, no information is provided in Table E3 explaining the asterisk for baseline information on principals for FAFSA. The narrative does not provide information on how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information (Part B of Selection Criteria) or how the LEA will review and improve measures over time if needed (Part C of Selection Criteria). Overall, the evidence supports rating at the lower part of the middle range.

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

5

2

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The application does not include a high-quality plan specific to E4 (as required from the Selection Criteria), with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The Selection Criteria included in the narrative for E4 are not those from the 2013 NIA or RTTD application. The application narrative describes an overall process evaluation and summative evaluation strategy, but specifics are not directly related to any particular goal and activity in the project. The narrative states the project would contract with an evaluator to work alongside a National Evaluator for Schools That Care, but does not thoroughly provide what the grant evaluator will undertake and what activities would remain under leadership and responsibility of the National Evaluator. Overall, the evidence provided in the narrative support a rating at the low end of the middle range.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

|  | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | 10        | 5     |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The application provides tables with the overall project budget and for each of the five subprojects. The tables include the identification of funds from the grant and funds from other non-RTTD sources. It is not clear why, at several places in the

budget tables, a line item is listed as an ongoing cost, but a cost is not included for one or more years of the grant (e.g., STEM workshop for parents in STEM at the Fantz subproject; tablet PCs in Online Personalized Learning Community subproject). Similarly, it is not clear from the narrative or tables why some costs for evaluation of project implementation fidelity (i.e., classroom observations to measure implementation of evidence-based instruction) is only budgeted for the first project year, while consultant costs to perform a preliminary needs assessment is included in each project year. At times the amount provided in the overall subproject budget is not reflected in the narrative for that subproject. For example, \$103,080 is listed as a travel line item in the STEM at the Fantz overall budget but it is not included in the narrative for that subproject; thus, it is not possible to determine if that amount is reasonable, necessary, or sufficient to support the project. Overall, the application does not provide a thorough and clear explanation for the budget as a whole, and sufficient details on subproject activities and personnel to determine if the budget is reasonable and sufficient to support development and implementation of the project. The evidence supports a rating in the middle range.

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

**10**

**5**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The narrative does not include a high-quality plan specific to F2 (as required from the Selection Criteria), with goals relevant to this section, activities aligned to the goals, a timeline for each activity, deliverables for activities, and responsible parties to implement the specific activities. The application includes a brief narrative and budget tables that describe funds needed to sustain the project after RTTD grant funding ends. However, the information provided is not clear in various aspects. First, the narrative indicates a budget narrative is provided in Appendix A on page 50, which is not a budget, but the LEA Evaluation Form. Appendix H contains budget pages, but it is not clear that all of the tables in the appendix refer to years 5-8, as the names of the columns on H1 and H7-H20 denote years 1-4. Second, the overall budget table contains amounts for line items not found in any of the subprojects (e.g., overall budget has travel funding for \$90,723 but no travel funds are denoted in any of the subproject budgets). Third, the narrative states that Table F2 shows post budget estimates, but the application does not contain a Table F2. The LEA is relying on train-the-trainer models to provide sufficient post-grant training on all training, including the online management system, professional training on cognitive rigor, and parental training. However, there is no evidence provided that indicates prior train-the-trainer efforts have resulted in high levels of knowledge and skill that enabled prior programs/efforts to continue. In addition, the LEA is assuming that non-training services (e.g., curriculum collections; classroom observation systems) will not need upgrades or enhancements but will “produce infinite sustainability.” This is not likely to occur as most technology and instructional systems require upgrades or develop glitches or bugs that must be fixed. Overall, the application provides some strategies that have potential to sustain portions of the project beyond the grant funding, but there is insufficient clarity and information provided to determine if sustainability is likely with the described activities. The evidence supports only a rating in the middle range.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The application provides a lengthy (10 page) narrative on the Competitive Preference Priority (1) selection criteria. The narrative presents and describes a number of community organizations with which Parlier USD has partnered in the past. However, the narrative is not clear on several items. First, the narrative is vague on whether the Parlier Communities That Care (PCTC) project is currently in operation, or in the planning stages (e.g., “Parlier’s implementation of this system is just the first to appear in California”). This is important, because if the LEA’s project already is running, the project may not need some of the activities and funds as stated in the application. Second, the narrative in several places does not make a clear distinction between the Central Valley Communities That Care (CVCTC) and the PCTC. For example, the narrative points out that key leaders have made a “commitment to CVCTC” as if that means the leaders have committed support to the LEA’s project (the PCTC). Similarly, it appears that PUSD is more of a partner with CVCTC than vice versa (“PUSD forms an important partner with CVCTC”), but the focus of the RTTD funding is what partnerships bring to the overall LEA project, not what the LEA brings to outside organizations. The narrative does not describe 10 population level desired results (Competitive Preference Priority 2) for students in the LEA. Instead, it lists 10 questions (metrics) from the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Surveys. The narrative indicates the full PNA survey would be administered every year, but provides no information on how the results of the 10 metrics would be used to target resources, nor does the narrative describe how the partnership would improve results on the metrics over time. Regarding Competitive Preference Category 4, the narrative presents information on enhancements from the grant funding to CVCTC, not enhancements to the LEA’s project (“budgeted in this proposal is the creation of a Youth Advisory Council within CVCTC”). Thus, the narrative presents more of a picture of what the LEA (through the grant) can do for the CVCTC than how the CVCTC will

support and enhance the LEA's project. The narrative describes generic capacity building activities for the national Communities That Care system (for CPP #5), but does not provide specific details on how the partnership would build the capacity of staff within PUSD schools. For CPP #6, the application presents a description of the process evaluation for the Central Valley CTC project, but does not provides specific details on how it would be applied to the PCTC project. The narrative does not present annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures. Overall, the CPP narrative is not a clear and cohesive presentation of the PCTC project and how it differs and is distinct from the CVCTC, and how all of the activities and partnerships presented augment the overall LEA project. The evidence supports a rating in the low range.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

|                            | Available | Score      |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b> |           | <b>Met</b> |

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The application addresses each of the core educational areas, though in too brief of a manner regarding retention, recruitment, and rewarding of highly effective teachers and principals. The narrative describes LEA use of various assessments and a data system that supports personalized learning environments (e.g., quality control through review of assessments by PLCs). The application provides brief information about reform efforts in the LEA's low-achieving schools, which included replacing principals and teaching staff.

The application describes a rather narrow-focused personalized learning environment thorough an alternative energy project for students in grades 4-12. Within the limited time that students would spend on alternative energy tasks and activities, the project, as presented, would likely increase students' interest and achievement in related STEM goals, and decrease achievement gaps. The application does not thoroughly address how the project would impact the overall instruction and student learning in non-STEM courses and subject areas.

|              |            |           |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>97</b> |
|--------------|------------|-----------|



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

#### Application #0201CA-2 for Parlier Unified School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> |

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The Parlier School District's proposal - Schools that Care - consists of five projects:

1. STEM at the Fantz: a project-based learning experience - alternative energy installation
2. On-line personalized learning environment
3. Community as Educator with the Central Valley Communities that Care partnership (Competitive Preference)
4. Data-driven professional growth
5. Fidelity, success and sustainability - project management

The applicant lists the four core educational assurance areas stating that these were used in developing the application. All the assurances are directly linked to the plan except for turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant does not fully address this. There is no discussion about how the district will build on its school improvement work only mentioning that there are two School Improvement Grant schools where the educator effectiveness pilot is being implemented. No other details are provided.

The other assurances areas are adequately addressed as follows:

- standards and assessments - use of a peer-collaborative model;
- student data systems - use of classroom-level data and monitoring of student success;
- educator effectiveness - use of the state's educator evaluation system with enhancements and supports.

The approach to reach the goals of the proposal is based on using a specified project-based learning experience, data-driven decision making and community partnerships. The applicant provides a list of a variety of strategies used for each of the projects. The applicant presents strong descriptions of the projects and their components. A Logic Model has been developed for each of the projects to guide implementation.

The project management component is designed to ensure direct oversight to ensure fidelity of implementation of each of the projects.

The classroom experience will be enhanced with the use of more rigorous content, curriculum and assignments as teachers incorporate the new content standards and pedagogy. The applicant plans to use a well-defined professional development model to achieve this goal. Also, the rigor of assessments (quizzes, exams, benchmarks) by teachers will be addressed using the school's professional learning communities and teacher evaluation system. While the description of how the classroom experience will be like for teachers is well defined, the impact on students is not described.

Overall, the applicant provides a vision that builds on the three of the four core educational assurance areas - standards and assessments, data systems to measure student growth and effective educators. Information about turning around the lowest performing schools is insufficient. Also, it is not clear how the classroom will be different for students with the implementation of the proposal. The reform vision is reasonable. As a result, the score for this section is in the top of the medium range.

Notably, throughout the application, the applicant references other participating school districts and a consortium. This application is for one district and does not include other district participants. This is confusing.

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>10</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |  |  |
| <p>The applicant will be serving all of the district's seven schools - four elementary, one middle and two high schools. The applicant does not address the process it used to select the participating schools.</p> <p>The applicant describes its rationale to serve certain targeted grades. Not all of the students in the district will be served concentrating on grades 4-12. This includes participating educators as well. About half the students in the elementary-grade span will not be participating because the project-based learning component is developed for older students. This is a reasonable approach to exclude these younger students who would not benefit from this project since this is anchoring other components of the proposal.</p> <p>Two of the schools - Martinez (elementary) and Parlier Junior High (middle) are low-performing schools as defined by the state.</p> <p>The applicant clearly depicts the intended participants and those that will be excluded. The data tables list the participating schools, students and educators.</p> <p>Based upon the demographics of the participating schools, they collectively meet the grant's poverty criteria. Overall, the district has a poverty rate of 94%. About 98% of the students are Hispanic with a majority of English language learners (55%) and about 33% are migrant signifying high-need students to be served.</p> <p>Based upon the quality of the rationale used to exclude certain students and educators and the completed participation tables, the score for this section is high.</p> |  |  |

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> |
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|                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|

The applicant provides information about its current reform efforts. Logic Models for each project are included as a framework to guide the reform strategies of this proposal.

Each of the Logic Models includes most of the required elements of a high-quality plan - goals, activities, deliverables, and timelines. The "objectives" in each of the models are clearly defined and are specific for the individual project's steps to implementation. The "evidence" is directly related to the objectives and as such is relevant. Use of these models will serve to guide implementation. However, missing from all the models is the identification of the responsible parties for each of the activities. The outcome measures - only short (end of year 1) and long term (end of year 4) - are identified. Annual outcomes measures would strengthen the application.

To scale-up beyond the participating schools, the proposal includes plans to develop an implementation manual using a professional technical writer. An overview of the successes and challenges of the proposal will be published and a web site developed. This is a reasonable scale-up plan for other districts and schools by advising them of the project using a web site and using designated personnel to provide a "how to" manual. Types of communication are also identified, such as publishing articles and using a robust web search engine for access to the materials. The approach described will serve to inform other interested districts and schools about this reform proposal. The Logic Model addresses the scale-up activities.

The overall plans and Logic Models to implement the grant initiatives are credible to reach its grant outcome goals even though there are missing elements to a high-quality plan. A reasonable plan to scale up beyond the participating schools is provided. Therefore, the score for this section is in the top of the medium range.

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The application includes annual outcome tables for summative proficiency and growth, achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment. Baseline data is provided with annual goals.

The outcome goals are projected to gradually increase throughout the grant period and post-grant. The tables include the primary student subgroups in the district (all, Hispanic, English language learners, economically disadvantaged and special education). The identified goals are equal to the state's ESEA targets and projected using the upcoming new state assessments.

For the performance and achievement gap tables, the goals are for language arts, math, algebra 1 and general science. Specific grades are not included. Rather the goals are for grades 4-12 in language arts; 4-8 in math; 8-11 for algebra; and 5,8, 10 for general science.

The gap table identifies student subgroups and the comparison group, which is the statewide population as a whole.

The summative performance goals are reasonable - for example for language arts, the "all student group" is to increase from 29.8% to 51% in four years. In math, it goes from 45.8% to 66.7%. Based on these goals, they are achievable although not particularly ambitious over the four-year period of the grant.

For the achievement gap tables, the goals are more ambitious - for example the all student gap in language arts is now - 24%. The goal in four years is a 0% gap. In fact, the four-year goals for all the subgroups are 0% except for English learners, which is to beat the gap to a rate of 10%. These goals are ambitious, maybe not achievable.

For the graduation rates, the data is combined for the two high schools. The all student baseline is already at a high level of 90%, with a goal of 94.5% in year four. This goal is ambitious and achievable for the "all students" category. At high levels of proficiency, it becomes more difficult to make large measurable growth. On the other hand, for the special education population, the baseline is a low of 5.9% with a goal of only 15.5% in four years. This is not ambitious although achievable. The college enrollment table is achievable - 92.5% baseline with a four-year goal of 94.9% for the "all students" category.

The district also plans to use the state's Academic Performance Index (API) to measure district achievement. Currently, the district's score is 673 out of a total score of 1,000. The goal for the district is to reach 808 at the end of year four.

Overall, the data is clearly presented including baseline and goals that range from reasonable to ambitious, achievable to not.

The extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance is adequately presented based on its vision and approach. Because of the mixed goal outcomes, the score for this section is in the top of the medium range.

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

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant does not provide a clear record of demonstrated academic success over the past four years. The applicant cites an increase in the state's API measures since 2012 outpacing county and state averages although the data table to support this is not included in the application.</p> <p>The student proficiency success of the district has improved. Evidence is provided for selected grades (5 and 7) and subgroups (economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and English Language Learners) as compared to state outcomes. The evidence is provided for three years.</p> <p>The graduation rates are also cited as evidence of a success rate. The overall graduation rate is 90% for 2012, and a low of 5.9% for special education students. Data is not provided for a four-year period nor are comparisons provided for county and state results.</p> <p>College enrollment rates are also provided for high school graduates showing rates from 81.8% to 92.5% in its student groups but the table only displays current year data.</p> <p>Of the district's seven schools, two are designated as persistently lowest-achieving by the state. These two schools are starting their second year of implementing the School Improvement Grant. The applicant does not provide any evidence of the success of these schools other than to say that they replaced their principals and one replaced half of its teaching staff.</p> <p>The applicant describes other grants being received and implemented in its schools without providing evidence to document the successes in student performance outcomes achieved.</p> <p>The district has recently designed an instructional model centered on cognitive rigor and use of research-based strategies. This model is in the process of being adopted for implementation in September 2014.</p> <p>To address non-academic issues, the district implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support program. Evidence of specific student outcomes is not provided other than to say the program was labeled as a "model program". Additionally, the district is working with the Central Valley Communities That Care organization to support the "whole student". Specific student outcomes are not provided as evidence of the success of this partnership.</p> <p>Efforts to make student performance data available to parents occur using an annual report (Standardized Testing and Reporting) and mid-trimester progress reports. The application states that these reports are sent out to parents. These efforts, as described, are minimal.</p> <p>A clear record of success, in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching, is not fully demonstrated since the data outcomes of its low-performing schools are not documented and only several grade level proficiencies are provided. The district's efforts to make student performance data available to parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services are not sufficiently addressed. Due to inadequate evidence, the score for this section is in the low-medium range gaining points for successes in some of its grade levels and student subgroups for the past three years.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>   | <b>5</b>  | <b>0</b> |
| <p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The school-level expenditure data as defined in the application notice is not currently available to the public. Therefore, there is not a high level of transparency.</p> <p>The applicant has evidence of individual personnel salaries, however, only the county office, on its web site and in a local newspaper, provides this information. Evidence submitted only shows the newspaper's web site. No information is provided about the district's own efforts to publicize the school-level expenditure data.</p> <p>Because the four categories of school-level expenditures are not already available, the score for this section is zero.</p>  |           |          |
| <b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> |

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

As evidenced in the application, the state received the application and in its letter of response to the district does not specifically identify any issues related to legal, statutory or regulatory conditions. Further, the applicant cites a specific state code that gives flexibility to school districts to prepare students as lifelong learners.

Because the district itself is designated a "Program Improvement, Year 3" district, the state has certain oversight. It is not clear if the applicant has sufficient autonomy or needs state approval for implementation of this proposal.

Due to the lack of clarity about state oversight, the score for this section is in the high-medium range.

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>8</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Application development efforts began in January 2013 using a consultant to assist the district. Efforts included a two-day meeting with the school board, parents, city council, and a private business.

Another meeting was held to address the educator evaluation system based on local professional growth. This meeting included teachers, the Faculty Association president, school board members, parents, local government and school administrators. These activities demonstrate strong efforts to engage the stakeholders.

There is no evidence; however, of student engagement in the application development or outreach to parents who did not participate in the actual meetings. Overall, engagement consisted of only meetings. No other methods are cited.

It is not clear what revisions were made to the grant based upon stakeholder feedback. No evidence is provided.

The union's president signed the application. A letter from the union is not included as evidence. Letters from the mayor and the state confirm the 10-day notice requirement. The state's letter does not provide comment. The letter from the mayor is in support of the grant proposal.

The application states that it obtained letters of support from key stakeholders, which comprise of: the county office of education, chamber of commerce, police and youth center. Copies of these letters are provided as evidence.

Due to the narrative and evidence provided, stakeholder engagement occurred in the development to a degree, however evidence of direct engagement of students and outreach to parents was not demonstrated nor is it clear how revisions to the grant were incorporated. The only type of engagement that occurred was during meetings. No other methods are described. The evidence of letters of support is provided from key stakeholders, the mayor and state. Therefore, this section score is in the medium range.

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

|                                    | Available | Score     |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>12</b> |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has an implementation plan, the Logic Model and Timelines for each of the five components in the proposal. The Logic Model has a number of strengths - the goals, activities/objectives, timelines and outcomes. There are outcome measures identified however only in year one and four of the grant. This weakens the plan.

Although the proposal includes the development of personalized learning plans for students that includes community survey information, continual feedback, incorporates STEM career pathways and embeds relevance development, there are no specific details on the actual process of completing one for each student and a target for when all students will have one in place.

The use of relevance development is to enhance student appreciation of learning by connecting content with interest. This model serves to meet the requirements of the grant to ensure that students understand what they are learning is key to success.

The district is replacing its direct instruction model with a cognition-driven model starting in September 2014. To meet the needs of teachers, there will be workshops during the summer of 2014. This training will link the content standards to the model of real-work applications. Instructional methods will then be developed. This is an initiative that is not specifically part of this proposal as such as the district has already planned to alter their instructional model. This model supports the

goals of the proposal. This adds consistency to the grant to better engage students using this new instructional model.

Building on this change, the grant proposal will implement a project-based learning experience using an alternative energy education program. This project includes a real-life laboratory exposing students to STEM career opportunities. This project is a creative way to incorporate the new instructional model using a project-based learning experience. It affects teachers and students using a concrete project district-wide (grades 4-12). It is unclear how the lessons learned from using this one particular project will be translated into other project-based learning experiences. Once the solar project is actually built, no details are provided if it can continue to be implemented in subsequent years.

The educator evaluation system will be used to monitor implementation of the professional development for the project-based learning and will include the professional learning communities as a method to ensure implementation to better serve and engage its students. Use of a specific project is a strength to the application as it is a specific goal to focus on. However, missing are the steps to go beyond this one specific project.

The personalized learning plan is described as similar to a special education plan using the metacognition concepts for students to identify and pursue learning and their own development goals. Frequently updated individual student data is achieved via the learning plans using the personalized targets. As such, personalized learning recommendations will occur via the learning plans. Missing from the application are the concrete steps in the development of the plan with students and parents. It is unclear if a template exists already and the timeline of implementation is not specified.

The alternative energy project-based learning experience will deepen student learning and help to develop these skills in other areas for both the student and teacher. Professional development will focus on ensuring that lesson plans and materials are aligned to the standards so the instruction to the students is specific and relevant to this project-based learning experience. In the first year, a professional research firm will conduct an analysis of student work to ensure that the curriculum matches the standards, has rigor and pacing for optimal student learning. The work will then be conducted in subsequent years in the professional learning communities. This is a good way for the project to have initial outside support with the goal of developing capacity to assume the subsequent responsibilities. It is unclear; however, if other specific project-based learning experiences are planned.

To meet the need of exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives, use of the Internet will be expanded to all families from one of the community partners using a technology grant. Therefore, students will have web access from home as well as at school. Additionally, all students will be provided a personal device to access the Internet. Community partners will train parents on the use of these devices and provide cultural sensitivity workshops. This plan ensures that all parties have the devices and have access to training to use them. This is a strength to the application.

The project-based learning is designed to avail students with digital content to promote collaboration, critical thinking and inquiry-based skills. The guided inquiry model will be utilized. Accompanied professional development for teachers will occur. It is not clear how this specific project-based learning experience will be scaled-up for other such experiences and how use of this specific experience will be continued in subsequent years.

The sequence of academic content will be reflected in pacing calendars and the professional learning communities will develop the Personalized Learning Plan for each student. Again, the application lacks specific details on activities, timelines and outcomes for the development and launching of the plans for each of the students.

A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments will be utilized using teacher-centered and student-centered instruction. High-quality content will be developed using the project-based learning model - the alternative solar energy. This will be initiated by a solar expert and further developed using the teaching staff thereby deepening their content knowledge as well.

Ongoing and regular feedback will occur using the student information systems at the district. The data system identifies students needing intervention. The learning plans will also have targets and goals for each student. It is not specified how and when this will occur.

Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students are currently addressed in several of the district's current grants. The district contends that all their students are high-need so accommodations are made system wide. One strategy to engage students and parents is planned through the use of videos about STEM careers. The access to these videos is not described.

Students will be provided training and support to use tools and resources from their teacher of record and teachers will receive training from their Team Leader who will be initially trained by a third-party vendor. This method is a positive way to build staff capacity over the long-term.

Overall, this section addresses student learning using a specific project - the alternative solar energy project. Missing from the application is how this particular project will continue to be used and translated to the development of other project-based learning experiences. The use of a specific project is an innovative approach to engage students and teachers in

the development of other skills. For the teachers, it is especially strong in that the district's new teacher evaluation system will be used specifically in the implementation of the project. Missing are details about the development of each student's individual learning plans. The score for this section is medium.

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>12</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

For teaching and leading, the applicant plans to use the solar project as the vehicle to enhance and support the district's professional development system. Academic coaches will be used at the school-level for teachers to assist in the grant implementation as well as the overall teacher evaluation system. The use of professional learning communities will also be used. This is an innovative approach to engage the professional staff in learning and developing their skills using a specific project. The plan, however, lacks specific details such as annual measurable outcomes and responsible parties. The Logic Model only includes outcomes for years one and four of the grant. Outcomes for each year of the project would strengthen the application.

Adapting content, depth of knowledge, and instruction are focused specifically on the solar project. This approach is comprehensive relative to this specific project. However, details are lacking on how to scale this up to other types of project-based learning experiences.

As part of this grant, a longitudinal data system will be developed as an on-line platform for student-level data. The applicant does not specifically address the frequency of measuring student outcomes such as formative assessment data.

Using a system of collecting student-level data will also assist educators in making decisions about student and educator learning. The plan is to initially use the third-party vendor to train staff, while building the capacity of the professional learning communities. This is a strength to the application. Additionally, staff will have access to use the actionable data from this system to develop plans for students and to improve their own practices.

The educator evaluation system is designed to provide useful feedback to teachers for professional growth. The educator evaluation system will be used as a means for continuous improvement of the quality of instruction. The system includes classroom observation tools and a curriculum analysis tool. Outcomes will be used to improve teacher quality. Training, systems, and practices will be in place to continuously improve school progress by using vendor training, coaches, and communities of practice. The applicant provides solid evidence of the tools to be used for this purpose as part of its educator evaluation system. The Logic Model and timelines provide a good plan of action to accomplish these goals.

To address training, policies, tools, data, and resources specific to the gathering of student outcome data are described using current state and local systems. As part of the proposal, a longitudinal data system will be developed for sharing of information for educators, students and parents. However, the specifics of engagement of parents are not sufficiently described.

The plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals is solely based on the use of the district's educator evaluation system. No other specific strategies are identified. This lack of variety and absence of a specific plan, other than the educator evaluation system, weakens the equity of instructional quality for students.

Overall, the plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment is appropriate to reach the goals of the proposed initiatives. This plan sufficiently includes quality approaches to implement the educator evaluation system. The score for this section is in the medium range losing points for missing elements of a high-quality plan and lack of strategies to increase effective educators in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b> |

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The governance structure of the Schools that Care Project is depicted in an organizational chart, showing the four projects with the management and implementation components, Executive Committee, school board and superintendent. The applicant has developed a MOU with the Community that Cares organization as a partner.

An Executive Committee to oversee the grant will be developed, which consists of the superintendent, other district administrators, the faculty union, business, community partner, one high school principal, a faculty representative from the elementary and secondary schools and two student representatives. This structure provides broad representation.

Some of the governance structures described are confusing because they appear to be designed for a consortium of districts. For example, the development of a District Consortium Management Office and a 7-member Implementation Committee are not consistent with a single district application. Also, the administrative positions listed are not easily discernible on the organizational chart.

Despite the consortium references, the organizational structure is sufficient to provide support and services to its schools. District Team leaders will be utilized to support implementation. These include technical support, professional development, instruction and the alternate energy program. These functions directly align with the component of the proposal.

According to the applicant, the staff evaluated the current structure with respect to policies and practices to implement the proposal. Some structures may need to be rewritten such as grade levels, separation of individual subject areas and technology use and expectations. As a result, model policies will need to be developed. A specific plan is not evident to conduct this work. No specific goals, activities, timelines, outcomes and responsible parties are identified.

Some of other policies to be addressed include how students demonstrate mastery, at multiple times and in multiple ways, use of the educator evaluation outcomes, technology access with personal devices, and use of technology outside of the school day. Because the district lacks consistent data systems, the applicant describes the school leadership teams as being at a disadvantage to have flexibility and autonomy on these policy issues. As part of the grant, the teams will need to work on these model policies. Again, no specific plan is provided to address this work. Nor is the composition and practices of the school leadership teams specifically described. The applicant does not specifically address issues such as autonomy over school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets.

At the district, there is a comprehensive structure and operations that insure that resources and instructional practices are adaptable and fully accessible to its English Language learners. All staff received training and have been certified in bilingual education. The district has adopted a language acquisition design as its instructional framework. However, the needs of special education students have not been specifically addressed.

The district's Logic Model is supported by a central office structure that is designed to support implementation of the grant components. Sufficient leadership support is identified for the grant. However, the plan for the work to ensure that comprehensive policies and infrastructure exist for every student, educator, and level of the education system to provide needed resources and support are not outlined in the application that includes goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. Therefore the detail of the plan is lacking. Additionally, it is unclear if the school leadership teams have sufficient autonomy to facilitate implementation of the proposal. The score for this section is in the high-low range gaining points for the organizational structure supporting the Logic Model.

|   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b> |
|---|-----------|----------|

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal components require that students use computers and have access to the web. The grant targets computers for all participating students in grades 4-12 and upgrades wireless access at the schools. To prepare and support students and teachers, the district's IT department will provide technical help. The Logic Model and Timelines identify the goals, activities, and deliverables. Responsible parties are not specifically identified. The deliverables are provided for the first and last year of the grant. Outcomes for the other two years would strengthen the proposal.

To address needy parents, the district will have a loaner computer program. A community partner will provide the technical support for these low-income parents. Each school's Team Leader will also provide support for parents. The Logic Model does not specifically address the technical assistance for parents and lacks implementation details - specific activities, outcomes and timelines.

A longitudinal data system will be developed as part of this grant to track student learning and success. There is a list of activities for a third-party contractor to complete. The timeline specifics are not provided.

The applicant states, "all data will be converted to a common format" as part of the contracted service. There is little information about open, interoperable data system. The applicant does not provide specifics other than to say that the current data systems will be transformed into open formats. A specific plan to do this is not provided.

Because all the elements of a high-quality plan are not included to address district and school infrastructure and a lack of information about the open communication systems, the score for this section is in the middle of the medium range.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant describes the research and general model framework to guide the continuous improvement process. The application does not include a specific plan of action to conduct this feedback process for the grant as a whole or the individual projects and components. The descriptions of the district's process do not provide any detail about the publically sharing of information about the quality of the investments funded by this grant. Also not addressed are timely feedback on progress to use for ongoing corrections and improvements. The elements of a high-quality plan such as goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties are not provided in the application.</p> <p>Because the application lacks a viable continuous improvement plan and process, the score for this section is low.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant describes the school board meetings as the vehicle for on-going communication about the grant. These board meetings are scheduled bi-monthly. Also, there are existing advisory committees that comprise of parents that will be used to communicate with them about the grant. The applicant plans to use its partner - Communities that Care - to enhance its communication efforts and serve as an outreach wing of the district. These activities are not specifically aligned with timelines, deliverables or responsible parties. Therefore, all the elements of a high-quality plan are not included in the application.</p> <p>Referenced, as evidence of its communication plan is the CalGRIP6 grant. This is not a plan specific to this proposal, rather to another district grant.</p> <p>Because the on-going communication plan to engage its internal and external stakeholders is not provided, the score for this section is low.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Performance measures are provided for effective and highly effective educators. The district provides baseline data and targets for each year of the grant as well as the post-grant expectations. The district uses five subgroups including the "all students" category.</p> <p>For grades 4-8, the performance measure (proficient in language arts or math) is described with baseline data and annual targets. The targets rise incrementally each year and are achievable, not ambitious in that a student would only have to be proficient in one content area to be deemed successful.</p> <p>The non-academic performance measures for grades 4-8 and grades 9-12 are absences and survey results of perceived levels of caring relationships. Baseline data is provided and improve over time. The targets are not particularly ambitious. For example, in grades 4-8, 39% of the "all student" category has fewer than five absences with a goal of 56% of students having fewer than five absences at the end of the grant.</p> <p>For grades 9-12, the measures are the number of completed free applications for federal student aid and completion of a career course. The baseline data is provided and increases each year. For the career course completion, the targets are not ambitious. For example, for the Hispanic students, the baseline is 65% with a goal in four year of only 68%. The increases are minimal and the standard of only completing one course is weak.</p> <p>For the non-academic indicators, the outcomes will be available three times during the school year to tailor the proposed plan for improvement.</p> <p>The rationale for selection of the performance measures is specified and is sufficient to support the grant outcomes. The targets are achievable. The review process to analyze the performance measure results or adjust/improve the measures is not explicitly described.</p> |           |          |

Because the targets that are not ambitious, this section scores in the low range.

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

**5**

**1**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant intends on hiring a grant evaluator to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant implementation. A specific plan with goals, activities, timelines, deliverable and responsible parties are not included in the evaluation plan. Therefore, the application lacks a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant.

The applicant plans on developing a community development matrix to evaluate the grant in addition to the already identified performance measures. The plan does not include the specific steps to accomplish this.

Due to the lack of a high-quality plan, information, and detail other than the hiring of a grant evaluator, this section is scored low.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b> |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

There are separate budgets for each of the projects in the proposal:

1. STEM at the Fantz: a project-based learning experience - alternative energy installation (\$864,092)
2. On-line personalized learning environment (\$3.45 million)
3. Community as Educator with the Central Valley Communities that Care partnership (\$1.3 million)
4. Data-driven professional growth (\$3 million)
5. Fidelity, success and sustainability - project management (\$1.3 million)

The total amount requested is \$9.9 million. The district intends on using \$1.4 in other funds to support the proposal. Each of the five budgets provides detail and justification of the costs. The Budget Narrative provides detailed information about each of the projects and their components. A strength to the proposal is its management focus on the train-the-trainer professional development and costs to sustain the project beyond year 4.

One-time and on-going investments are identified in the cost assumption column. However, there are some inconsistencies. For example, the cost assumption states funds are in year 3 only and the cost is in year 2. Technical writer and training for PLE is for Year 1 only and funding is actually in each of the four years. Also, funds are identified for a preliminary needs assessment, although there are funds budgeted for each year and the cost assumption states "year 1 only".

Costs are identified for start-up of components such as the curriculum analysis. The first year costs are higher and are reduced in subsequent years as staff capacity is increased to assume the functions. This is a positive aspect to the proposal.

For the Community as Educator project, there are significant costs to train parents in two projects (\$336,000 and \$252,000 total). However, the details about these trainings are not sufficiently supported in the narrative in the competitive preference. Additionally, the cost description and the justification for the longitudinal data system are inconsistent.

Also identified are the local, grant and other federal funds to be used during the grant period. The type and amount of funds are identified.

The budget overall results in a high score, losing points for confusing cost assumptions, lack of information and inconsistencies.

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

**10**

**4**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant intentionally planned the grant and budget to support the projects with a drop in expenditures for each year.

Many activities are designed to be assumed by existing staff as they are trained to conduct grant functions. This is a reasonable approach in an effort to sustain the strategies funded by the grant and build district capacity.

Additionally, the applicant plans to hire a Sustainability Manager to develop a strategic sustainability plan that includes external funding sources. The district plans to use federal and local funding for some of the costs after the term of the grant is over.

Absent from the application is the specific sustainability plan to guide this work. According to the applicant, this plan will be developed after the grant is awarded. Because the current plan does not have the components of a high-quality plan (activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties), this section of the application scores in the low-medium range gaining points for the de-escalating budget during the grant period and for developing existing staff to implement the strategies.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Competitive Preference is one of the five projects - Community as Educator - of the grant. The applicant is using the Central Valley Communities that Care (CTC) partnership to implement this project.

The applicant provides an in-depth summary of the community and demographics.

The Parlier Promise Zone was created in 2010 with a partnership between the district, the city and Youth Centers of America. Since that time, the organization includes many additional partners including academic, career technical, family support and skills development, cultural awareness, behavioral/mental health, juvenile justice and private businesses. Because the partner is familiar with the community and already has established relationships, it is an asset to the school district. They already have a working relationship that began several years ago. The partnership description is sustainable based upon the on-going relationship between the district and the organization.

Building on this partnership, the Central Valley Communities that Care and the district have joined together to implement one of the projects in this grant - Community as Educator. The Central Valley Communities that Care currently has a state grant to serve the district specifically for gang reduction. Missing from the application are the outcomes of this state grant.

For this project, the partnership has identified a list of strategies for the project - life skills training, Parent University, video programs, and higher education campus visits. The specific population to be served is not specified. The size and the scope of the project are not identified.

The CTC has identified 10 metrics from its organization's survey (the Prevention Needs Assessment - PNA) to use for the purposes of this project. The ten metrics in the survey are listed identifying the target population group as grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 who take the survey. The desired results are not specified for each of these metrics. There are no annual performance measures nor are the population-level students identified.

The survey would be administered annually and use an online longitudinal data system to track the results. Based on the data system, results can be used to cross-reference data from program effectiveness to the individual participant. The ultimate goal is to collect data from all the community agencies that will ultimately participate in this project. Currently there are three partners with the project with plans to increase the number as the grant continues.

A strength to this component is to use the data to determine the effectiveness of the social service programs so as to target services to student needs. It is the intention of the applicant to scale the project up to serve students in the broader region. This is also part of the state grant goals. The scale-up model lists strategies that are likely to increase the expansion of the program (professional marketer and meetings with area networks). These are viable scale-up strategies.

To integrate community services, a 30-member Youth Advisory council from grades 6-12 will be assigned an adult mentor for coaching for public speaking and engagement. Also, a mental health component is noted without providing specific details.

The CTC will train community members to use data from the PNA to identify the risk factors of students and design programs to address these needs. Training sessions are designed for these community members. The frequency and type are not sufficiently described. Additionally, activities to build the capacity of the school staff are not included as a strategy. The budget narrative identifies trainings for parents however no specific details are provided.

The evaluation plan is that of the state grant and not specific to this project.

Based upon the application, it is difficult to determine the specific students that will be served by this project. The model is more of a needs assessment and clearinghouse than a service provider to students and families. The partnership's strength is the annual needs assessment and the data system of community provider outcomes. Because the services to students is not clearly defined to provide additional supports to students and families, the score for this section is low.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

|  | Available | Score      |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b>   |           | <b>Met</b> |
| <p><b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposed plan is designed to provide needed services to the district's seven schools, students, educators and families. Alignment with the district's vision and reform goals are coherent. The use of a specific project (solar energy) is an innovative approach to engaging students and teachers across the grade spans for the participating students.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant coherently addresses the core educational assurances areas although not comprehensively. The application builds on the core educational assurance areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aligning content standards using the curriculum alignment strategy and peer collaboration;</li> <li>implementing and using data systems to measure student growth by implementing a longitudinal data system and classroom-level data system;</li> <li>embedding professional development using the educator evaluation system with a classroom observation model and use of professional learning communities.</li> </ul> <p>Missing however are details about specifically addressing turning around its lowest-achieving schools. The district had two low performing schools each having a School Improvement Grant. No information has been provided in the application about the schools' reform strategies, outcomes thus far and district support to these schools.</p> <p>The district is well poised to apply the five projects, as it will be developing comprehensive data systems, technology for students, and teacher evaluation systems using already developed tools and practices to support implementation with fidelity.</p> <p>The projects expand services to students, while building district capacity with teacher professional engagement, growth opportunities, support and use of the project-based learning experience.</p> |           |            |

|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>103</b> |
|--------------|------------|------------|