



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0017IL-1 for Sandoval C.U.S.D. #501

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Sandoval narrative describes an ambitious project that builds its work on four core educational assurances. This proposal is based on the framework of "Continuous Progress through Continuous Planning, Implementation, Analysis, Reflection, and Adaptations for continuous school improvement." There is a graphic provided that supports the consortiums plan to facilitate continuous improvement that addresses the four core assurances. The proposal describes an ambitious program that will address the four priorities through eight goals or priorities: Instructional strategies including curriculum alignment, assessment and standards adoption (CCSS) (priority 1); Twenty-first century classroom design and supporting data systems(priority 2); dual credit, project-based curriculum and online courses; Parent, community, and school support; personalized learning plans and wraparounds (priority 1,4); teacher/principal recruitment (priority 3); teacher/principal/superintendent evaluations (priority 4), and programs of study, including work/force career and technology education. The narrative provides a thorough plan for each year of the grant that lists key goals, activities/objectives, deliverables/outcomes, and responsible parties at the consortium, Board of Education, and district levels. A weakness is the lack of specific persons responsible for the implementation of goals. The narrative provides more evidence of a comprehensive plan to change the educational environment to enhance student learning. The narrative describes a thorough analysis of data to identify key deficiencies of school/instruction and family/student that interfere with students' success in school. Then, based on research from such note-worthy institutions as the: Academic Development Institute, National High School Center; Charlotte Danielson Group and Marzano group a theory of change was developed based on the previously noted strategic elements.</p> <p>This exhaustive process lends credence to the idea that the consortium has developed a credible approach that will facilitate student learning through increasing equity based on personalized student support. Some examples of this include: complete alignment with CCSS; project-based approach to learning; innovative enrichment and credit recovery programs, personalized learning plans and wraparounds that are assessed monthly updates, and incentives for principal recruitment. The narrative provides some detail that describes the classroom environment. Most of this detail involves technology and data innovations in the classroom. Less information is provided regarding day to day activities.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium narrative provides a sound rational and process for choosing schools. The rational was based on seeking schools that met the RTT-D eligibility requirements, and had the same values and vision for reform. These schools also needed to have had a record of success in school improvement and demonstrated forward thinking ideas. Next, school board and union approvals were sort and gained. The appendices provide evidence of school board approval. All schools agreed to a minimum time commitment. Five schools are participating in grant activities: Ramsey CUSD #204; Centraia HSD #200; Sandoval #501; Egyptian # 5, and Vienna HSD #133. Total numbers of participating educators (223); participating students (2790) low income students (1877); and high need students (2233) were annotated in the proposal. There are a significant number of high needs students(80%) and low income students (67%) among the participating schools.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative references their "Theory of Change Model'. While there is no particular logic model referenced in the narrative, a graphic is provided that is an adequate representation of components of their plan. The narrative reasonably suggests that implementing their systemic approach will support district-wide change. The narrative describes a process</p>		

where every element of the plan leverages one-time investments that allow for program sustainability once the grant period ends. There is a goals timeline in the narrative and appendix that highlights of the information necessary to provide a high quality plan. These include goals, timeline, partner responsible for activities, deliverables. No specific information is provided relative to the consortiums plans to scale this project to other schools.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Though performance of summative assessments was provided, goals for statewide proficiency were not provided. This oversight meant it was not possible to accurately judge whether the consortium goals meet or exceed those standards. However, the yearly goals set for students at various grades on summative assessments appear to be feasible and in some instances ambitious. The consortium has set ambitious goals for decreasing the achievement gap. Where large gaps in achievement are annotated, the consortium has set ambitious goals to close those gaps. In some instances, the achievement gap is taken from a 70% gap to a 10 % gap. While this is an ambitious goal, it is not clear that it is achievable. The consortium has set achievable graduation rates for the grant, though they are not necessarily ambitious. Some schools have graduation rates already in the high 80s, yet goals are set in the mid-90s rather than high 90s or 100%. This is a weakness. College enrollment is achievable and moderately ambitious. On average the enrollment goals are projected at increasing about 5% a year. The consortium is to be congratulated for having moderately ambitious graduation rates.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes an appropriate level of success over the past four years in advancing student learning and increasing equity. The narrative documents a 13% decrease in the achievement gap between low-income and non-low income students in reading, and a 15.6% decrease in mathematics. This is a reasonable level of success. The narrative notes that due to small numbers of special education students in each grade, it is difficult to assess progress. The consortium is looking for other ways to analyze data for this sub-group. Graduation rates have generally increased in the last two years. Little information is provided regarding turning around the persistently lowest-achieving schools. The narrative notes that both low performing principals and teachers have been fired. It can be inferred that this was done as means of reforming low-achieving schools. The narrative describes a web-based parent portal. The narrative describes an extensive communication and guidance system that should inform parents, students and educators and improve participation, instruction, and services. These communications include an Individual Progress Plan (IPP) data sharing conferences, goal-setting, grade checks, and information supports through meetings, the handbook, website, and one on one conference. The data provided presents a credible case for their previous success in advancing student learning and increasing equity. These data support the idea that the district be able to achieve these results in the future.

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

5

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

No compelling evidence is provided related to this indicator.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative convincingly describes a state environment that has established conditions and autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. The narrative points to the state adoption of CCSS and PARCC as a critical part of creating an environment conducive to student personal growth. Personalized learning environments are supported by the state in that the state sets the standards but does not dictate how they are to be achieved. This should allow districts the autonomy to design an environment that is able to fit the individual needs of students. The narrative further notes other state initiatives that serve to support and accelerate school district personalized learning environments: Illinois Shared Learning Environments; Illinois Pathways Initiative; and the Rising Star Continuous Improvement System. The narratives describes an environment where the State Board of Education establishes goals and learning standards, but allow the school districts to establish learning objectives, instructional

systems to measure progress against these objectives. Similarly while the state specifies high school graduation requirements, the state allows the districts to define the instructional units to meet these requirements. The narrative documents a state environment that is both supportive of personalized learning and that leaves autonomy for districts to design appropriate learning environments appropriate for their constituencies.

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

15

12

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is a comprehensive description of how students, families, teachers and principals, and personnel were engaged in the development of the proposal. The narrative describes a process where students, parents, community and business groups participated in surveys meetings and focus groups regarding RTTT-D. Existing student groups were used as sounding boards for ideas. These data were used to form the goals of the program that is proposed. The narrative notes a substantial number of students (85%) are willing to be involved in the grant. The students were most interested in Individualized Learning Plans and improved course offerings. The narrative suggests that teacher support was sort and given. However, no evidence such as a letter from the collective bargaining unit or evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools without collective bargaining representation are provided. The narrative notes that these items were obtained but could not be found in the appendices. The narrative annotates that principals had equal voice in decision making and their concerns were taken into account when designing the proposal. An extensive array of letters of support from key stakeholders was provided. These letters included such organizations as IASB, IASA, IPA, parents and residents of districts and students. The narrative provides a complete picture of a process where stakeholders feedback and initial comments were involved in designing the proposal. However, the lack of letters from the unions or documentation that 70% of the teachers support the proposal weakened the proposal.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative details a comprehensive proposal where high quality content is being used to help students achieve their goals. In particular, the narrative points to their 21st century classroom that will provide a greater selection of tools to ensure student success and facilitate deeper learning. The narrative describes an environment where empowered students will have the opportunity to make sound decisions. The consortium plans on offering a comprehensive learning environment that starts with quality aligned content, uses innovative platforms to deliver instruction (including innovations such as flipped classrooms and distance learning) and utilizes the Illinois Shared Learning Platform that allows the stakeholders including students to track student performance and access high quality instructional resources. This platform appears to be powerful enough to not only track progress but also to make adjustments in students programs and fine tune individualized learning plans and to implement various strategic interventions if progress is not being made.

The narrative proposes to use computer technology to facilitate students' access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. This seems to be an innovative and reasonable way to facilitate these goals in a rural environment.

The narrative states that the Great 8 design operates as though all students are "high-needs", which means that the system can accommodate even the most challenged students. Earlier in the narrative, RTI was mentioned as a vehicle for meeting the needs of these students. The lack of specifics weaken the narrative. The plan appears to be adequate though limited details detract from the overall plan. The GREAT-8 design presents a reasonable plan to put mechanisms in place to provide training and support to ensure that they will understand how to use the tools and resources. The consortium hopes to eventually have written, audio and audio-visual assets. However, currently written instructions are the medium available.

This a generally a clearly articulated high quality plan (includes timeline, goals activities, deliverables and responsible parties) for learning. However, the lack of specifics related to students with special needs weakens the plan.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes an adequate plan where all educators engage in training and in PLCs that support their capacity to support the effective implementation of students needs and graduate on time college and career ready. This design is based on both PD and PLCs. In PLCs, educators meet to review data, review the data with students and use these data to adapt content and instruction, and frequently measure student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards. While ample information, is provided relating to activities that educators will be doing to improve instruction, scant information on how the PLCs will be used to support the individual and collective capacity of educators. The narrative describes an adequate process where evaluations will be used to improve teacher and administrator effectiveness. The theoretical foundation to be used is Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The framework will be used as a foundation of a school district's mentoring, coaching, PD, and teacher evaluation process to help teachers become more thoughtful practitioners. No information is provided related to the nuts and bolts of this program such as frequency of feedback etc.

The narrative provides evidence that all teachers will have access to and know how to use actionable information that help educators to identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual needs; high quality learning resources; and processes to match student needs. The plan outlines a comprehensive array of strategies, tools, and resources. These resources include PARCC, CCSS, "coach the coaches", and the Danielson's framework. The combination of tools would appear to provide an extensive array of opportunities for educators. This plan includes using information from the districts evaluation system to help school leaders be competent in a comprehensive learning process. The consortium does plan to use Rising Star or Advanced Ed as the structure to review continuous improvement. These are both web based tools that allows districts to use data to make instructional decisions based on data and goals. District Leadership Teams will monitor each school's progress and use the web-based system to implement processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. This process seems to be achievable and appropriate as it involves regular monitoring and many stakeholders. The narrative suggests that the state's RTI plan will be used to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly qualified teachers and principals. It is confusing as to how RTI would affect this outcome. Early in the narrative the consortium would use various incentives to recruit highly qualified educators. However, no specifics are given about this. More information about retention and recruitment of teachers would have strengthened this section. The consortium appears to have an general plan, without more information about the details of this plan, it is difficult to judge it as a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a general statements that the IARSS Rural consortium provides support and a number of necessary services to all participating schools. It is also noted that partnerships will be developed with such organizations as IEA, IASA and IPA to support continuous school improvement. Specifics are not annotated. In the next section, it is noted that there is a RTT-D Grant Administration Team which serves as ", improvement central". Detail is provided in the Competitive Priority section clearly annotating the structure of the consortium structure. The structure has representation from all consortium members. The governing structure appears to be organized in a manner that provides support to all members and is a high quality plan.

Convincing detail of an effective organizational structure is provided regarding the school leadership teams. These unique leadership teams (LT) which are comprised of educators, parents, community partners and others provide evidence that there will be broad stakeholder involvement in the project. The narrative documents that the LT will have appropriate flexibility and autonomy over school schedules, calendars and personnel decisions. These decisions will be facilitated through the use of data in leading and managing project activities. In the execution of these duties, the LT will have flexibility to move monies from one category to another to support the needs of students. Another unique characteristic of the TL is that they will have access to a community outreach worker to facilitate relationship building with key stakeholders and efficient delivery of student services. The narrative documents a LT that is the cornerstone of the proposal in each school. The team in conjunction with the principal allocates and manages resources to address schools' priorities and students' needs. This plan presents a robust plan for the LT involvement in the day to day activities and structure of the program.

The narrative describes a plan to provide the students the flexibility to earn credit based on mastery rather than "time in the seat". One of the methods that will be used is making units modular. There is a general statement that students master standards at their own pace. Though not annotated in this subtopic, earlier in the narrative there was description of such processes as: flipped classrooms; dual enrollment, use of technology, project based learning. The narrative suggests that

"rapid, differentiated support" for students who fall behind or become disengaged" will be enhanced by the use of technology enabled solutions and predictive analytic tools. Specifics are not provided. Other supports for this "time" flexibility include summer schools and adjustable pacing. Information from across the narrative paints a reasonable solution to providing flexible timing to master standards. The narrative generally suggest that the consortium will develop tests that allow a student to demonstrate mastery of a standard and that teachers will be given the flexibility to use multiple alternative testing practices. Portfolios and student constructed responses are mentioned in this section. Earlier in the narrative performance based assessments were mentioned, but there are few details provided to the reader. The narrative contained a general statement that the project will provide numerous learning resources (distance learning, digital content, dual credit courses, etc.) that will be made fully accessible to all students including those with disabilities. Earlier in the narrative RTI was mentioned as a process that would be used, however, sparse detail was provided relating to students with special needs. An apparent weakness is that most of the listed strategies seem to be more appropriate for middle-high school students. Sparse information is provided regarding strategies for the younger student.

The narrative presents a very detailed picture of a high quality plan for LT except for the lack of detail about providing earning resources that are fully adaptable for all students. This omission weakened the narrative. The LT is presented as having sufficient autonomy and flexibility over the day to day activities of the program. The narrative contains in initial sections and appendix a high quality plan that includes: timeline, activities, rationale, deliverables, and partners responsible. There are no details related directly to parties responsible.

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

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative convincingly describes a high quality plan for parents, teachers and students to have access to content, tools and other learning resources. One innovative method to be used is full-service community schools. There are also on-line digital tools and a community resource person to help ensure that necessary access is maintained and fostered. The narrative describes appropriate methodology to provide appropriate support that includes the use of: FAQs on district website; community user groups; group training; training videos, and a technical support team. The consortium has had the foresight to also provide training for parents on how to use the data, and to allow parents access to district computers for those who do not have them. The narrative notes that all data will be available in standard format to allow importation to third-party analysis tools. The narrative provides convincing evidence that families will have the tools and access to data (attendance, development of reading & math skills, and career and college readiness) in a timely and user friendly fashion through such avenues as emails, text messages, and web-based data systems). The narrative notes that the data systems will comply with rules for interoperability. The narrative notes that Illinois has developed a data system that is available to each school district that has this capacity. The proposal presents a thoughtful and thorough approach to making sure that all stakeholders have the access, knowledge, technical support and tools to support personalized learning. The narrative contains in initial sections and appendix a high quality plan that includes: timeline, activities, rationale, deliverables, and partners responsible.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While the narrative explicates the six steps of continuous improvement plan in a general way, few specifics are provided related to the monitoring of the processes and innovations or failures of the process. One instance of detail is described by saying that teacher teams will meet during PLC time as RTI teams to review and modify curriculum. The narrative mentions a selected process which will be reviewed annually through multiple assessment tools that will be reviewed annually by the RTTT-d Grant Administration team which will inform educators quickly for teaching purposes or curriculum change, but little detail is provided related to this process. A general statement is made that continuous progress monitoring applies to teacher effectiveness but no details are provided as to the process involved. The narrative provides extensive detail related to the continuous improvement of students. The narrative describes such strategies as a Continuous Improvement Student Record, which contains a holistic report of students' progress and frequent analysis of data by the RTI team. Progress will also be followed using the Student Information System to monitor grades. Little information is provided regarding outcomes after the term of the plan. From previous sections, information is shared with stakeholders in various formats. Information from other sections provides details related to how the applicant will publicly share information on the quality of its investments. The narrative failed to provide the details of a high quality plan such as timeline, persons responsible etc.. This lack of detail weakened this narrative section.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative documents a portions of the information necessary to provide evidence of a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with external and internal stakeholders. Details related to timeline and persons responsible would have strengthened the narrative. The plan includes activities such as: annual Parent Assessment Seminars; midterm and weekly eligibility checks on students; small group student meeting to review progress and set new goals; parent phone interviews; monthly newsletter distributed through various print and internet media; Coffee Klatches, and schools' monthly progress reports in radio or newspaper media. Social media will be used to establish two-way communication between parents and schools personnel. Additionally, team progress will be presented at appropriate educational conferences. The consortium has compiled an ambitious communication and dissemination plan that uses both new media and more traditional media to communicate and engage with stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>An adequate number of goals were presented. Data were provided for all categories and subgroups. However, information was not always presented regarding what the measurement was, why it was chosen or how the statistic was calculated. For example the table for grades 9-12-c does not annotate what it is measuring. Of some concern is the goal for special education students related to highly qualified teachers. That goal is set at 10% while those for the participating students in general and low-income students are 25%. Some of the goals appear to be achievable but not ambitious. For example attendance for 8-12 grade is at 93% currently, but the goal is not 100% at the end of the grant. The goal for 11-12 attendance is only 73% which does not seem very ambitious. No information was provided regarding: rationale for selection; how the measure will provide rigorous timely and formative information, or how measure the measure will be used to provide feedback. Some information is provided in the previous section on how measures will be reviewed. But no information is provided how the measure will be improved if it is insufficient over time to gauge implementation progress. The narrative does not provide evidence of consistent measures of student growth and progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No information is provided in this section regarding a plan to evaluate the evaluation plan and the effectiveness of Race to the Top-D funded activities. Information is given in previous sections that give general information about ongoing monitoring, but there are no specifics regarding an evaluation plan.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>F1.2 The consortium provides a budget that identifies funds that will support the project. The bulk of the funds (\$10,000,000) will come from the grant. Other funds (\$100,000) are allocated to the project but the source is not specifically noted. There is mention of School Improvement fund grant money, but the \$100,000 is not clearly labeled. The narrative says that there is a breakdown of one-time and on-going investment. The narrative notes that one-time expenditures such as technology and PD will build capacity and sustainability of the personalized learning environments. The narrative provides adequate detail to show that they are focused on strategies that should support long-term sustainability through the use of technology and PD. The amount seems to be reasonable for the expenditures planned.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative provides a general statement of elements that are necessary for sustainability of the plan. This generic list includes elements such as: leadership; capacity building; partnerships; communications; evaluations and finance. The narrative describes that evaluation will be needed to keep track and maintain continuous strategic improvement and that the consortium will focus on reallocation and pooling of funds. There is no estimated budget for years following the grant.</p>		

No specifics are given related to state and local government support and financial support, or how the evaluation of the program and resources will be accomplished. There is scant evidence of a plan for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The consortium presents a coherent ambitious plan to integrate public and private resources to augment the schools resources. The partnership includes a broad spectrum of community stakeholders: Head Start; Manta Health; ISBE/I Dairy Council Nutrition Programs/ Community Colleges and Adult Education Programs; Faith based Programs; Community Health Organization and Special Education Cooperatives. Their process to assess progress appears to be very effective. The personal learning plan will be used to track results. The consortium has identified seven desired results of these partnerships. The Critical Care Team will review students' academic and behavioral records, and generate action plans for the students to integrate education and other services. The consortium's data system will provide relevant data pertaining to the needs and assets of students. The consortium also plans to use the data to assess the needs and assets of both community and schools to make sure they can accommodate a variety of needs. As noted in a previous section, the consortium has a robust plan to engage parents and families. This is a major strength of the partnership. The narrative makes a general statement that it will routinely assess applicant's progress. More detail related to this process would have strengthened the narrative. The process revolves around a minimum of quarterly reviews and other tools such as satisfaction surveys. A graphic clearly delineates the decision making process that that will allow for evaluation of existing and new supports that can be used to address the needs of participating students. The consortium identifies seven achievable goals. As no specific benchmarks are indicated, it is difficult to judge "ambitiousness" of the goals. Little information is provided regarding "high needs" students. The program appears to be designed to reach all of them at some level. More information about timeline, and persons responsible for actions would have strengthened this section.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has clearly and comprehensively addressed how they will build on the core educational assurances to create learning environments that will meet the above criteria. Their GREAT -8 design for genuine reform articulates a plan that is complete with a theoretical framework that embodies continuous progress through continuous planning, implementation analysis, reflection, and adaptation. Credence is given to this assertion by their provision of a timeline that lists: key goals, activities/objectives, deliverables/outcomes and responsible parties. These goals and objectives will be facilitated through several mechanisms such as: analysis of personalized learning plans; a first responder team; peer and adult mentoring. These activities will be coordinated through the community co-ordinator who will monitor that the core assurances are being fostered and facilitated. The narrative articulates a careful analysis of data by all stakeholders to build the proposal and a plan for the future to continue to use data to drive instruction.

Total	210	163
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**Race to the Top - District
Technical Review Form**



Application #0017IL-2 for Sandoval C.U.S.D. #501

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS present a clear, well-developed argument for their vision of reform.

Their vision has a rationale informed by a review of the needs within the context of each member comprising their consortium. Analysis of the data within their context subsequently established a clear sense of what the consortium needs were, and a determination of how to organize a response to the needs with reference to RTTTD. They conclude:

The analysis of data indicates there are simply too many holes in the existing educational system that lead to opportunities for a student to become disengaged and lost in the educational process. Every one of the challenges listed above represents a broken link in the chain that can lead to student failure. The consortium chose to utilize the research of the Academic Development Institute, the National High School Center, the Charlotte Danielson Group, and the Marzano Research Laboratory to delve into these “broken links” and connect them one by one. Our Theory of Change includes eight (8) strategic elements which create the basis of a reform system and assessment plan to support the four core educational assurance areas. They are specifically designed to meet the needs of our students every link is essential for success.

They organize their response around two broad issues: key factors of the student/family and key factors of the school/instruction. These in turn are addressed by eights steps, called the Great-8, namely:

- 1) Instructional Strategies including Curriculum Alignment, Assessments and Standards Adoption:
- 2) Twenty-first Century Classroom Design and Supporting Data Systems
- 3) Dual Credit, Project-Based Curriculum and Online Courses
- 4) Parent, Community, and School Supports
- 5) Personalized Learning Plans and Wraparounds
- 6) Teacher/Principal Recruitment
- 7) Teacher/Principal/Superintendent Evaluations
- 8) Programs of Study, including Workforce/ Career and Technology Education

Detail is provided at each step explaining how each works individually and distinctly and as part of an integrated response to address the two broad areas described and the four core educational assurance area. For example, the actual subsections of the Great-8 design (listed above) point the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized learning. Their discussion of Great-8 (1), for example, provided insight into how. Here they present their argument for alignment with the Common Core Standards and its impact on the teaching and learning experience:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) challenge schools to achieve educational success beginning in the critical early development stages. There must be an early focus on engaged learning, higher order thinking skills and questions, problem solving, reflection, self-assessment and communication skills in all fundamental areas of learning. This design element will include job embedded professional development with onsite coaches to ensure instruction is more focused. Coaches will model, use observation, and provide support to educators. Learning targets will be specified in every classroom. Instructors will utilize end of grade/course exams to confirm that standards are addressed and mastered. Pacing guides will be developed and used by teachers to make certain that time is budgeted to encompass every standard at that grade level and/or subject area. Continuous use of data, academic and behavioral, provides a complete picture of the individual learner and a roadmap for his needs, thus supporting a personalized learning environment. Complete alignment with the CCSS will allow us to eliminate gaps and redundancies in instruction.

This discussion is bolstered by the others, and together with the discussion at Great-8 (2), 'Twenty-first Century Classroom Design and Supporting Data Systems', for example, provide a very good sense of what the classroom experience will be like for teachers and students. Great-8 (2) describes developments for the use of technology to support teachers and students. For example,

21st Century Classrooms that allow all students to access, manage, integrate and evaluate information within the classroom. All students and staff would use tools such as word processing, e-mail, presentation software, spreadsheets, decision support programs, design tools, time management programs and collaboration tools combined with learning skills in core subjects. Robust internet service that provides for quick access and interconnectivity, as well as quick access to technology support, is imperative. Data systems will be put into place that allow us to measure student growth and success, such as periodic progress assessments and to determine and address overall student achievement gaps in support of Absolute Priority One. To have this available, all classrooms at a minimum must be equipped with internet with wireless capabilities, a projector, interactive boards, and appropriate software. In an optimum 21st Century Classroom, the teachers and students will have additional access to other technology tools including mobile devices to create, communicate, and collaborate. These tools will also be utilized for the collection and analysis of the data necessary for teachers and principals to measure progress and make corrective changes to improve overall instruction. Each classroom will have web-based applications that connect students, parents, and educators. Appropriate tools needed would include desktop and mobile devices, flip cameras, and video conferencing capabilities.

Personalized learning plans and wraparounds will address the need for systems to using data to monitor and inform on student progress. They will utilize a portion of the RTTTD funds to provide incentives and innovative opportunities for new and existing staff, for example the advancement of educational degree in exchange for an extended term of employment with the districts. They will also emphasize marketing and expansion of the search for high quality educators; this will be augmented by working with local universities to offer their schools as lab schools. With their focus on eight essential components they expect to ensure success for each vital link of the chain in an approach which they expect will produce students who will enter college or the workforce with the skills and understanding necessary to be successful and contributing members of society.

They do not separately delineate specific strategies for turning around their lowest achieving schools, but they do indicate that their change model is premised on less successful school partnering with more schools and learning from them. This is being modeled by them and seems a good strategy.

IARSS provided a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties in a credible plan for a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that addresses all the stipulations of (A)(1).

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

IARSS provided an excellent account of how they decided on the schools to be included in their consortium.

Essentially they argued that they ensured that all participating schools had the same values and vision for reform, and that schools were aligned with the eligibility requirements in RTTTD. They also required each school to provide: evidence that their school board and union permitted them to participate; drafted a plan element that would be used to develop the consortium's vision. This resulted in the first 5 of the 8 vision elements and provided a baseline draft for the grant proposal. Following that, a list of goals was created to help guide the consortium through the application process. The proposals contributed to a list of objectives necessary to achieve those goals as well as a look into a school's unique practices so that each participating school would bring a differentiating element, approach or idea to the table. The participants agreed on a minimum time commitment to the program to ensure that adequate resources were provided to construct a quality plan.

IARSS listed the schools that were participating in the grant.

They also completed the form provided to indicate the numbers as requested by (A)(2)(c). All low-income and all high needs students in the consortium will be included. The number participating educator was listed.

IARSS' approach to implementing its reform will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation.

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

IARSS met the requirements of (A)(3).

They provided excellent detail in other sections of (A)(1) to indicate how their plan was developed and how it will work as a model of change. Their plan included all the elements of a high-quality as defined by RTTTD.

At (A)(3) they provided a summary of their model of change, which provided insight into how they envision the reform being scaled up to support district-wide change beyond their consortium.

[The GREAT-8 Design] will translate into meaningful reform that will support district-wide change beyond the participating schools by allowing the same model to be followed across the state. Others seeking to adopt this model should consider including participants with significant school reform experience. A logic model was developed to structure goals, objectives and outcomes through a closed loop improvement process. This grant provides the capital necessary to: develop the required curriculum; develop our assessment system and measure the results; purchase the required technology; and establish programs that will provide the necessary supports. It should be noted that almost every element of our plan leverages one-time investments that allow for program sustainability once the grant period expires.

Essentially, IARSS' contribution to LEA-wide reform and change is the development of a clear, comprehensive and coherent vision for reform, which others can use to inform their own.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS' goals for improved student outcomes meet most of the requirements of (A)(4).

They explained that the test for 3rd and 8th is the Illinois State Achievement Test and for 11th is Prairie State Achievement Exam which includes the ACT and Workkeys, and that their methodology for determining growth in performance assessments is the percentile of those meeting and exceeding state expectations. They expect different patterns of growth across the schools within the consortium and across; overall they make gain ranging from 10 - 53%. All schools and individual performance measures hit and/or exceed 90% by 2018.

Their methodology for decreasing achievement gaps was to determine the difference in the percentage of subgroup students meeting and exceeding on the ISAT and PSAE as compared to all students at a particular level. It would have been useful for them to provide evidence on each participating school and/or the IARSS consortium's performance on measures such as gender and race, within each school/consortium, and against the state.

Graduation rates move 77% to 94% overall; each school is expected to have different patterns of growth, but all hit 93-95% by 2018.

College enrollment rates move from 54% to 86% overall; individual school performance range from 82% to 89%.

IARSS also provided information on the optional stipulation of post-secondary degree attainment. They do present baseline information prior to 2013; they indicate that this is unavailable. The Consortium will track this data beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. They will do this by using student reported data on postsecondary degree attainment:

IARSS' annual goals are ambitious and achievable. It seems likely that their vision will result in improved learning and performance. Because they did not provide evidence on each participating school and/or the IARSS consortium's performance on measures such as gender and race, within each school/consortium, and against the state, they did not demonstrate the extent to which they will achieve increased equity.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS has evidence of some prior record of success and conditions for reform.

To demonstrate a clear record of success they highlight steps taken to ensure success, for example that there is a philosophy of 'whatever it takes' that guides the work of teacher and administrator; this includes removing educators considered to be underperforming from their posts. They also list a number of funding streams that they have secured to evidence their record and conditions for reform.

A distinct approach for their lowest-achieving or lowest performing schools is not explicitly delineated; however, they have indicated that an important feature in their model of change is that lesser successful schools partner with successful schools to assist reform efforts. There seems to be two more successful schools in this consortium.

The fundamental argument that they present for decreasing the achievement gap is that: 'The consortium schools share a goal of improved student achievement that prepares students to be college/career ready, as well as competent, confident and lifelong learners.' This either suggests that all

schools have the same level and history of performance, and/or that the consortium will be addressing all the schools in the same way.

IARSS describe initiatives that they have implemented and what they have been doing well. While they identify initiatives that they have put in place, and this can be seen as success in itself, IARSS do not report the results of their efforts as well. Given the example of their efforts into strategies around technology and improving learning, it is evident that they have good rationale and initiatives, but results can also be inhibited:

Technology has also played a large part of school reform for our participating consortium members; however, there have been limited available funds to build our 21st century classrooms. Using the limited funds available, the schools in the consortium have experienced flashes of success such as electronic learning.

For further example, IARSS provided a very good rationale for the importance of meeting the current student needs as the means to improve learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. The most significant improvement has been the implementation of instructional strategies. They highlight Problem Based Learning (PBL) as an example of such a strategy used by all schools in the consortium. Two schools are highlighted as being particularly successful, and the results of one is used to provide insights into the successes. It is not clear whether they describe the full extent of the successes, for one or both schools, or that the successes delineated have been in or over the past four years.

In addition, they argued that they have made it a priority to close achievement gaps between subgroups and all students and present figures in support of this claim for the past four years. They present evidence in support of class. They currently do not have a method for assessing gaps between special education and regular education, and highlighted that they recognized the need for this and plan to address it. They did not report on race and gender; there is no indication why this is.

The evidence presented in support of closing the achievement gap is unreliable: the methodology used to produce figures is unclear; figures are inconsistent; hence their assertion of the following claim is unsubstantiated: 'Data in the table indicates the most significant achievement gap in reading over the past four years for the Consortium is 28.8 points between the low income subgroup and the non-low income group. As a Consortium this has been reduced to 15.8 points over the four year period.' The claim reveals that the emphases of their comparison is within and amongst the members of the consortium. It would have been useful to have comparison with other categories and groups outside the consortium.

IRS presented a graph on graduation rates for the past three years. Results are unstable for schools as a group; the performance of one school has been declining over the time; the other four, two in particular, indicate an upward trend.

They do not provide evidence on college enrollment.

They have a system for making student performance data available to students, educators and parents. Their narrative suggests that all schools have a web-based parent portal, and personal communication and guidance for students starting with an Individual Progress Plan, and continued with test data sharing conferences, and goal-setting. Grade checks are done weekly and D/F lists are maintained so students can get the specific help required. Parents, as well as students, are made aware of the supports through meetings, the handbook, one on one conferences, and the school websites. Formative assessments written by teachers are also said to be utilized to determine student progress on Standards-aligned content based on the Common Core State Standards; this seems to be amongst teachers in two schools that evidence a robust system; schools described as 'lead schools', in particular, demonstrate that data are being analyzed in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services.

Consequently, IARSS have met some of the stipulations of (B)(1).

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A response for (B)(2) was absent from the section.

The Table of Appendix included a listing, which indicated an attachment file, 'B2 Educational Data Website'. A further organization regarding this attachment highlights that the 'Relevant Selection Criterion' is 'Educational/salary data'.

The corresponding page number that is linked to this information is page 101. In IARSS' narrative, B2 would be around page 64. So, there is some ambiguity around the evidence presented.

The actual evidence that is submitted are three screen shots of websites, identified as follows: (1) Section B2: Websites for Publicly Available Data, Illinois State Board of Education Website; (2) IIRC Searchable Database for Illinois Educational Data, Interactive Report Card; (3) Searchable Database for Teacher Administrative salary. These of themselves would go part of the way to fulfilling the requirements here. The actual details are missing.

It is difficult to be certain about the extent to which IARSS meet requirements of (B)(2).

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

There are successful conditions and sufficient autonomy for IARSS to implement their personalized learning environments.

IARSS highlight that they are in a RTTT state and that the leadership has moved aggressively to implement reforms in the four core assurance areas critical to successful implementation of personalized learning. They have also aligned RTT3 award with other funding streams, implementing three key strategies for supporting and accelerating school district implementation of personalized learning environments. This includes Illinois' membership in the Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC), a significant group working on investment in technology with the support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the tune of \$100m.

In addition, IARSS highlighted that Illinois law promotes the ability of school districts to implement personalized learning environments and listed clauses with references to such things as Public Acts in support of their claim.

They argue that their Great-8 Design aligns with state efforts.

IARSS meets the requirements of (B)(3).

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

15

11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence of stakeholder engagement and support in the development of IARSS proposal.

They argue that they employed a series of meetings and surveys to gather and refine information in light of the RTTTD guidelines. They further highlighted that,

Students, parents, community and business groups have participated in surveys, meetings, and focus groups regarding the RTTT-D proposal. Groups were very responsive and provided insights from their perspective. Student and parent surveys provided perceptions into student demographics, their concerns, and ways they were willing to help in the reform process. The consortium's approach to the student body of each district was twofold, student involvement and student ownership. Each district utilized existing student groups (i.e. student councils, clubs, leadership groups) as sounding boards and for discussion of school improvement as it relates to the RTTT-D.

The questionnaire for teacher and student surveys were included in the Appendices. Parent surveys were not included. Using closed (YES/No) questions, both student and teacher surveys investigated the provision of instruction around the use of labs (2 questions), summer school (four questions) and extended hours (four questions); there was an additional question on transport for students. Except for the summary highlighted above, the results of the survey were not reported. The student survey did not provide evidence of questions on student demographics and their willingness to help in the reform process. It is not entirely clear how the survey questions and results were useful in the development of the RTTTD proposal.

Four of the five participating schools have a teacher's union, which have given full support. One school in a non-union affiliated district, has a letter of support from more than 70% of the teachers. These claims were not substantiated by evidence in Appendices.

There were 17 letters of support from various individuals, organization and groups. This included mayors, business bodies including the Chamber of Commerce, colleges, community groups, and teacher, parent and student representatives.

The evidence was supportive of strong stakeholder support; while IARSS maintain that there was stakeholder engagement, the evidence for how meaningful it was in developing and refining the proposal was not completely established.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS presented a detailed well-developed plan for preparing students for college and career.

They did not write their response explicitly to RTTTD expectations of a high quality plan. As consequence, their evidence for this was sometimes implied. For example, they offer rationales throughout their narrative, at different points, in support of their approach. This built their argument and together contributed to the credibility of what they proposed. Similarly they addressed deliverables throughout their text; these are discussed below. Timelines and responsible parties perhaps could have benefited from explicit and consistent attention.

They have a tough love approach to ensuring students understand what they are learning is key to their success: pathways are delineated for them which highlight the benefits of college and career readiness; and vice versa. This approach is supported by individualized learning plans developed for each student with the help of the guidance counselor, parent, teacher, and student. Individualized plans in turn are designed to help students identify and pursue learning and developmental goals. They are supplemented by individualized profiles, which take account of students' personal learning styles and interests; and safety nets to ensure students develop their skills at an individualized pace and the assessment tools to make sure students will not be left behind. Students will be guided to take responsibility for these and the achievement of their goals. IARSS highlighted that they recognize the uniqueness of students, and encourage this while also providing a variety of curriculum and educational delivery, such as video conferencing, to expose them to different culture, contexts and perspectives; given their rural context, this seems a good strategy. Other instructional approaches include the flipped classroom and distance learning, which together with the use of Kindles, Nooks, and Google Chrome Books provide increased opportunities for students and create greater coursework engagement.

Further, IARSS present the 21st Century Classroom as an opportunity to provide students and teachers a greater selection of tools designed to help develop skills and learning at a personalized pace. This will also increase access to dual credit/on-line classes, providing 24/7 access to taped lectures of college instructors. They plan to create materials to ensure that all students, parents, and teachers understand the tools and resources made available to them as they relate to tracking and managing their overall learning progress. These tools will include written, audio and audio-visual assets that can be accessed anytime through their ISLE training platform module by any student, teacher or parent. They envision the platform as 'an educational YouTube portal, where videos are searchable, comments provided and assets ranked by all users to provide a 21st century training center'. To this end, they will create audio tracks and video files, in addition to written instructions. The 21st century classroom is also presented as a means to provide high quality instruction, monitoring of student progress and feedback. In addition, they use standards-aligned content, and a universal assessment, aligned to Common Core State and College Readiness Standards, will be administered to the entire student population (K-12) three times per year. They also use a state, shared information system (ISLE) for monitoring and providing feedback. This informs baseline measurements and monitors progress toward individual student goals. This system enables individualized student data, personal learning recommendations and facilitates teachers' efforts to personalize instructional content to student needs. Their use of their Safety Nets project and RtI initiatives are also used to ensure students develop their skill at individualized pace and are supported by assessment tools designed to safeguard against students being left behind. Together with this, all curricular areas will be aligned to the common core state standards and delivered in the context of their 21st century classroom, where for example, they plan to employ flipped classrooms, distance learning, and state of the art electronic tools. With these they envision students' mastery of critical academic content; it also evidences the likelihood of deep learning.

Every student is treated as a high need student within their approach.

The plan is of high quality and meets a high degree of the requirements at (C)(1).

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS presented a high quality plan for teaching and leading to prepare students for college and career.

They did not write their response explicitly to RTTTD expectations of a high quality plan. As consequence, their evidence was sometimes implied. For example, they offer rationales throughout their narrative, at different points, in support of their approach. This built their argument and together contributed to the credibility of what they proposed. Similarly they addressed deliverables throughout their text; these are discussed below. Timelines and responsible parties perhaps could have benefited from explicit and consistent attention.

They have a thought out system in place to improve instruction and build capacity towards personalized learning environments that are supportive of college-and-career readiness. They highlight that teachers as individuals and teams will receive training and other opportunities for professional development. The level of work is reflected in the following:

All instructors will be trained in the use of new tools such as choice boards, problem based learning, tiered learning targets and mobile devices that are aimed at personalized instruction. Utilizing a student's progress report, they will make continuous adjustments to address both academic and non-academic deficiencies as well as efficiencies, requiring enrichment or acceleration throughout the student's educational process. The GREAT-8 Design requires that every teacher records student progress data on a regular basis in order to monitor that the student stays on track for college and career readiness. Teachers in grade level and curriculum area professional learning communities (PLC's) will review data with the focus on college and career readiness from the time a student enters school through graduation. This information will be shared with the students and their parents to enlist their support in reaching the students' goals....The

data will be used to fine-tune individualized learning plans and progress reports as well as to look at teaching/learning trends among educators. The PLC allotted time provides a valuable resource as teachers share information about students, discuss methodologies, and support the efforts of others to confirm that the individualized learning plan for a student is meeting all his/her needs. Schools in the consortium have already adjusted weekly schedules to allow uninterrupted PLC time.

This helped to provide evidence in IARSS' strong argument for monitoring students, and providing educators with high quality learning resources, processes and tools to match students needs. Further staff development will be focused on adapting the STEM curriculum, in particular. The consortium proposes to use STEM programs as a key method to address student engagement and individualization of learning styles; they will adapt content and instruction for differentiation according to students needs and interest and to optimize learning approaches. They also highlight their intention to maximize vertical, horizontal, and cross- curricular alignment from elementary to introductory college courses and support Common Core State Standards to develop English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science progression maps. They explained how they would maximize the use of technology, and contribute to meeting students' individual needs and progression to college and careers through such strategies as distance learning and conferencing amongst the five schools in the consortium, also including initiatives such as streaming college classes into schools and offering dual enrollment.

In addition to the training and professional development identified, to improve teacher and practice and effectiveness they will adopt the Danielson Framework. They plan to use a principal evaluation tool that will include: (1) the principal's specific duties, responsibilities, management, and competence as a principal; (2) identification of the principal's specific strengths and weaknesses, with supporting reasons; (3) alignment with research-based standards established by Administrative Rule; (4) data and indicators on student growth as a significant factor in rating performance. The consortium will also utilize the Illinois Principal Associations (IPA) Ed Leaders Network (ELN) and PD360. ELN and PD360 provide a wide variety of scientifically researched based professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers. The latter were highlighted as example of their strategies to ensure educators have actionable information that helps them identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interest.

Their plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals is connected to their use of technology in the 21st Century classroom; they also plan to use the State's Response to Intervention (RtI) plan. This address '1) Selection and implementation of universal screening and progress monitoring measures and the use of data for instructional decision making 2) Aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessments with the national Common Core Standards in language arts and mathematics and the Illinois Learning Standards in the other core curricular areas; 3) Effective instructional strategies, including teacher coaching and monitoring of instruction at the classroom and district levels; 4) Involving a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and others, in the development of District RtI plans.

They will frequently measure students in different ways. Evidence is already presented above to this end; in addition they will utilize the State instrument, Rising Star, or AdvancedED, as the structures to review the comprehensive continuous improvement process. IARSS argue that these tools guide districts and schools through the procedures and practices for systemic change and instructional improvement and provide the foundation for the consortium's implementation of its continuous improvement system to monitor, measure, and improve its strategies for personalized learning. All Consortium districts will submit school improvement plans.

This also provides training, systems and practices to continuously improve school progress towards the goals of increasing student performance

They highlighted at C1 that the GREAT-8 Design operates on the principle that every participant student is a high-needs student. All the students in their consortium are counted as high need students in their numbers. They highlighted that they wanted to address the shortfalls amongst low-income students elsewhere and their 21 Century classroom in particular responds to this. Where their plan results in improvement in every student's performance and achievement, it is possible, too, that they will close achievement gaps. If there are other subgroups within their population who are also underachieving, IARSS have not suggested here how they will specifically address the particular needs of these students to close achievement gaps.

Their response at (C)(2) is very strong, meeting a high percentage of the stipulations.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS' policy and infrastructure will support project implementation.

They did not convincingly establish that they will have a system and/or infrastructure that will provide support and resources when needed to every student, educator, and to the consortium, and each school and classroom within it.

They highlighted that a school-site leadership team, comprised of educators, parents, community partners, and others will be responsible for creating a shared vision for the school, identifying desired results and helping align and integrate the work of partners with the school. This team will be given the flexibility and autonomy of the local board of education in using data in leading and managing project activities within the school. Leadership teams will be given some control over school schedules, calendars, and school personnel decisions. They will also be given flexibility in the school budget to move monies from one budget category to another to support the needs of students.

They indicated that they have a 'plan to review policy with all of the local school boards and [conduct] an analysis of the infrastructure of each district with the support to make the necessary changes as outlined in other areas of this proposal.'

They also identified a system for supporting continuous school improvement through partnerships with the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Principals Association, and the Illinois Education Association. The role of the partnerships seems to be to evaluate resources, with the goal of maximizing the impact of educational staff on school performance/student achievement and reducing non-educational cost.

While their plan indicated that school leadership will have flexibility and autonomy as specified by (D)(2)(b), it reveals that there is organization at the school level to support implementation, but does not evidence a central office or consortium governance structure. Further details on the organization at the school level reveals that principals and leadership team will essentially monitor implementation and encourage participation from all stakeholders in adjusting developments. This supports the stipulation of autonomy and flexibility for leaders, but does not significantly advance evidence of a central office or consortium governance structure. Also, it would have been useful if they had rehearsed proposed changes they indicate they have presented at other places in the application - in this section, and articulated some hoped-for end results of what they envision them; it is not entirely clear, in this section, how they will operate at the consortium level. Also the role of the partnerships aforementioned to evaluate resources, does not convincingly reveal itself as a system that will provide resources when needed to every student, educator, and to the consortium, and each school and classroom within it.

They argue for competency-based pathways as a means to provide ways to validate the learning of standards that occurs outside the structure of the traditional school and offer flexibility for schools to engage students in learning that moves beyond the traditional constraints of seat time and divisions among content areas. These pathways provide opportunities for students to advance through content or earn credit toward high school graduation regardless of age or amount of time in the classroom, online, or in an off campus setting. This effectively addressed (D)(1)(c).

A convincing argument is presented, which indicated how they will develop practices that will enable students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways. For example, teachers will be given the flexibility to use multiple alternative testing practices, and employ several types of alternative assessments, including essay responses, oral presentations, portfolios of compiled work, short answer questions and demonstrations of a concept/strategy.

They hinted at the provision for students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times by highlighting that alternative assessments will be used at given intervals for grading or they can be used as a final assessment at critical intervals such as final examinations or for promotion to the next grade. Later, while discussing how they meet another stipulation in this section, they also highlight that students will be given the opportunity to retake quizzes and rework homework until mastery has been met. Together these provide sufficient insight into how they will provide students with multiple chances to meet mastery.

They highlighted their acknowledgement that everyone has a preferred learning style, which aids or impedes learning depending on instruction. They argue that numerous learning resources, which are extremely adaptable to students' individualized learning, will be made fully accessible to all students. They also presented a description of a re-organization of classroom experiences which seems likely to sustain and advance personalized learning. In addition, they listed the following as examples of learning resources: distance learning, digital content, dual credit courses and other leading edge strategies. These provide indication as to how learning resources may be fully accessed by students.

Consequently, IARSS' plan meets most of the stipulations of (D)(1). While they did not write explicitly to RTTTD stipulations of a high-quality plan, elements were implied and discernible in their narrative; timelines and responsible parties, in particular, perhaps could have benefited from explicit and consistent attention.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>IARSS indicated how they plan meet project implementation requirements for providing consortium and school infrastructure to support personalized learning. The requirements for a good plan as per RTTTD guidelines were implied, and were generally seen to be met, except for responsible parties and timelines, which were not generally addressed.</p> <p>In general, they did not explicitly and separately discuss how the consortium as an entity and as individual schools will have access to infrastructure, which supports personalized learning. They stated that 'all' stakeholders will have access and in so doing suggested that both the consortium as an entity and individual schools will have access to infrastructure, and follow and benefit from policies delineated for their use; however, they neither explicitly stated nor discussed distinctly how the consortium and individual schools would operate in this regard.</p> <p>However, they provided information that went some way in meeting the other stipulations. For example,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Their policies for access are to: leverage community resources such as online digital tools to ensure access outside of regular school hours; there will provision for 24hr access to technical support; and they will adopt a full service community school models to provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, and students' family members. They delineated a list providing many examples of actual programs that will be included in their adaption of a full service community service model. These addressed content and to some extent other learning resources. They did not describe in detail at this section, the infrastructure or specific resources and processes which they will employ to provide these services and continuous access, except to say that community 'online digital tools' will be leveraged, and that families that do not have access to the internet or computer at home, will be able to access to the districts' computers and internet during the evenings. It is noted that elsewhere in their application there is ample evidence that their Great-8 design operationizes much technological resources along with associated initiatives and strategies to use them. The question of continuous access was not comprehensively addressed.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">They argue that technical support will be provided all teachers, students and parents by means of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the district website, training videos, community user groups, and group training including parent trainings on how to access their child's educational data and a technical support team. This suggests that IARSS will have appropriate levels of support for stakeholders.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Their evidence for meeting the requirements at (D)(2)(c) and (d) is essentially their plan to use the data system developed by the state, the Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC). They suggest that this contains human resource data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data is available for each school district. They also highlight that data systems will comply with program rules for interoperability necessary to ensure data can be shared across all schools. They explain an effective strategy for training and involving parents in determining which indicators are considered necessary and that families will be able to use different forms of technology, such as email, text messages and web-based data systems, to gain access to students' data. It is implied, and given that they revealed earlier that they are within a RTTT state, it also assumed the state system meets the stated requirements. Especially, against IARSS' intention to use the IIRC, it is unclear the extent to which they will be able to make modifications for their own purposes as they indicate.</p> <p>In light of the foregoing, IARSS met most of the requirements of (D)(2), but did not demonstrate that they did so comprehensively.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>IARSS provided evidence of having a high quality plan to ensure rigorous continuous improvement.</p> <p>They established that their understanding of the process of school improvement is informed and supported by leading thinkers in the field. This suggested reflection on and awareness of how the improvement process might be expected to unfold and what they might beneficially do to ensure a successful context. In other words, it is not just trial and error.</p> <p>They provide a clear and integrated approach to continuously improve their implementation. To illustrate,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">IARSS posited that since student achievement is the focus of the grant their approach will be to monitor and ensure feedback and adjustment on student achievement. Accordingly, the foundation to providing timely and regular feedback on progress, and making adjustments, IARSS intend to position teachers at the center of the grant's implementation.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Teachers will be expected to meet regularly in different teams to review and modify curriculum plans and practices. They will also be</p>		

polled and will be expected to provide input on student achievement.

in addition to this, it is foreseen that there will be an annual review, with multiple checkpoints in between, including triennial benchmarks and weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring. They highlighted that they will use a nationally known, research-based electronic scoring and reporting instrument, such as AIMSweb or Discovery, and AIMSweb, Explore, Plan and ACT. They highlight that they will obtain and pay attention to data on career or college readiness in particular.

The annual review will be led by the 'RTTT-D Grant Administration Team, which serves as "Improvement Central" for continuous improvement reporting' and they anticipate that it will employ multiple assessment tools, listing: checklist, random interviews of students, teachers, Board members, parents, and focus group discussions.

Elsewhere in their application they mentioned their intention to conduct a longitudinal study to gather information during implementation and to inform on the grant after its completion. This seems an excellent approach to monitor, measure and publicly share information.

The foregoing demonstrates that IARSS met the stipulations at (E)(1).

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The quality of IARSS' plan had a few challenges associated with articulation.

They did not develop a pointed discussion of the rationale for their course of action at this section, although they briefly indicated why they would use meetings and earlier in their application argued for an overall rationale which highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders. Responsible parties and timelines were also not consistently identified. Also see below at paragraph four.

However, they convincingly delineated a dense pool of ideas to demonstrate a strong and credible approach to ongoing communication and engagement. To illustrate,

IARSS highlighted that they would convene a number of different types of meetings to discuss, gather and share information with different audiences, including parents, students and the community. Here they did not mention educators as stakeholders to be involved, but their application to this point is replete with evidence for ongoing communication and engagement with educators. Some examples that stand out include:

submitting a monthly progress report to local print or radio media

convening open meetings quarterly at off-site community locations

seeking membership on various school support agencies' boards and/or LANS (local area networks) to communicate district successes and to network

presenting at educational conferences and other venues where constituents gather

disseminating student produced videos on timely events, topics and grant progress over the school's area network

This is a good plan, which responds to the expectations of (E)(2).

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS' submission at this section meets some of the expressed requirements.

Figures on teacher and principal effectiveness were not provided; they argued that Illinois law requires implementation of PERA in 2014-15 and data are not currently available.

At this section they identify the 12-14 performance measures as required. They do not, at this section, provide a pointed discussion on why, or the rationale, for choosing the ones they do, nor how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to their proposed plan and theory of action regarding their implementation success or areas of concern; nor how they will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

Their measures seem more realistic rather than ambitious. Further, where subgroup projections are made, for low income and Special Education students, 'low income' generally tend to make better gains. This is seen, for example students in projections for Grade 9-12 students on track for college and career readiness based filling out FAFSA forms; and Credits Earned; their response to 9-12(c) showed a reversed pattern but the

measure was not clearly identified; and 9-12(d,e) maintained the pattern of low income groups doing better.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There was not a response provided for this section. Earlier in their application they mentioned a longitudinal study which discernibly and effectively addresses this criterion, but it is not argued for here.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS submitted a good budget.

They provided detailed information on subparts and identify all funds that will support the project. Funding sources will include the following:

- Professional Development (including travel, stipends) – RTT-District; School Improvement Grants; Title I and Title II.
- Personnel – RTT-District; School Improvement Grants; Title I and LEA.
- Equipment – RTT-District; School Improvement Grants; Title I.
- Supplies and Materials – RTT-District; School Improvement Grants; Title I and LEA.
- Contractual – RTT-District, School Improvement Grants

The budget is reasonable and sufficient for their proposal.

It clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, including one-time investments versus ongoing costs. They highlight the following:

- 1) Technology equipment – primarily a one time, major expenditure.
- 2) Professional Development – major emphasis on alignment of common core in all curricular areas; STEM; RtI This would include consultants, coaches
- 3) Project Management Costs – Director – full or part time and also coaching.

While they argue that they are investing in one-time costs and reducing personnel costs; the figures for Personnel and Fringe Benefits - and contractual, outstrip that for Equipment and supplies. Training stipends is very small by comparison, in a budget that is making significant demands on teachers.

This budget seems likely to support strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. It meets RTTTD expectations.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

IARSS' plan for sustainability is well argued, although it evidences some limitations as per RTTTD expectations for a high quality plan.

It has an excellent rationale and a credible approach: 'Sustainability for the consortium will focus on changing the system which will build the capacity necessary for long term success.' They are investing in 'upfront development costs' and avoiding large personnel investments. They also provide a succinct checklist for the plan for sustainability, namely,

- Develop a vision with guiding principles, involving all stakeholders.
- Build strong partnerships engaging organizations to support the GREAT 8.
- Celebrate success and communicate.

Evaluate progress and revise as directed through evaluation comments by Illinois State University and Illinois ASCD Determine what elements of the GREAT-8 need continued funding and look at all funding sources including reallocation leveraging existing dollars, partnership contributions, in-kind and donated services and Foundation exploration.

The checklist also provides indication of deliverables.

They indicated that leadership comprising representation from the board, the administration, community leaders, staff and student leaders will be expected to embrace the vision, utilize the skills, and provide the knowledge necessary to promote the change within the system and help deliver the Great-8 plan. They do not at this section provide greater detail and alignment of responsible parties.

Some timelines are implied, but generally are not explicitly addressed.

Here they do not delineate and discuss support from State and local government leaders, and financial support, although they do highlight that, '[t]he consortium members will focus on reallocation of current funds as well as seek additional funding to maintain all aspects of the eight elements. Affordability will also be addressed by pooling the resources of everyone in the consortium including partners.

They also highlighted that they will conduct an evaluation of the grant, but they do not at this section include a budget for three years after the grant.

They discussed capacity building as one element in their checklist. It would have been useful to see more focus on rewarding educators, both as acknowledgement for the hard work that they are expected to produce and to provide them with incentives to remain within the IARSS system.

IARSS meet some of the stipulations of (F)(2).

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

IARSS argue that they will maintain old partnerships and establish new ones to assist with every aspect of a child's life and thus support their entire project. They list eight groups with whom they will partner; they do not establish which, if any of these, are existing partnerships. The narrative is presented in terms of building new partnerships. If they are all new, this adds to the challenge of what seems a significant undertaken; the scope of their plans might challenge sustainability.

They describe a particularly noteworthy conception of how, what seems a mammoth task, would work by positing that: 'The school will be the hub of the community to advocate for these partnerships and serve as the advocate for our at-risk student population'. This is a strong way to conceptualize the task. They argue that through this approach they will increasing access and equity in high poverty districts, which will result in increased student outcomes. This is a plausible argument.

The details will withstanding some fine tuning, especially in the minutiae and logistics of delivery; nevertheless, their plan at the high level appears coherent. They provide point-by-point attention to each of the seven population-level desired results for students in the consortium and indicate how they are aligned with and support their broader Race to the Top – District proposal. They indicate how the seven address and support educational results and outcomes, and/or family support for all their high need students. For example, they highlighted, 'Early Childhood/Head Start: Children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school...[and] ROE/Community Colleges, Adult Education Programs: Students are career ready upon graduation. Continuing education and job skills training.'

They highlight that they will use the personalized learning plans and a data management system to track the indicators identified. They make a convincing argument detailing how they will do this and also how they will use the resulting information to target resources for *each* student, suggesting that this addresses both the level for participating students and the aggregate level for all students within the consortium. They provide an insight into how disparate groups and individuals

will work with the data. All will be guided by the this question: “What does this student need to be restored to the path leading to high school graduation, a successful job, or college enrollment – i.e. improved and balanced quality of life?” The results will feed into a coordinated response. They argue that a range of professional within and outside the school will meet to interrogate the data thus. This is a desirable ideal but perhaps also seems to pose significant logistic challenges.

They argue that their contribution to non-participating students and others outside their consortium lies in trialing their approach and, in particular, also building the partnerships between school and other entities. This is seen as facilitating the efforts of those who would want to use the approach. This is a reasonable proposition given their argument that rural districts face challenges securing partnerships in the community.

They propose 'a First Responders type of “critical care” team, comprised of GREAT 8 employees and school personnel' to be in place at each school to review individual student’s academic and behavioral records and enlist information from persons associated with that student as to the student’s history and behaviors that are affecting school performance negatively. The First Responders’ team will generate and implement an action plan, calling on its associated networks, to help the student acquire what is needed to succeed. This clearly is a good ideal. Nevertheless, it seems the First Responders will be in addition to other teams, for example, those tasked with reviewing personalized learning plans. Especially since this strategy speaks of the school doing the reaching out as opposed to the partnership integrating services, it draws attention to the possibility for overlapping, as well as possibly tedious work, to be added to the consortium's workforce and their supporters and stakeholders. This perhaps holds danger for sustainability.

In addressing Competitive Preference Priority 5 they do not effectively establish that they would be addressing partnership goals; this may be a consequence that partnerships being discussed are yet to be formed. Nevertheless, they describe how they would use existing data systems to collect data, engage parents, and routinely assess their progress in implementing their plan to minimize and impact and resolve conflict. They also identified the position and role of a community outreach/liaison coordinator who will create and continuously update the list of community service providers, agencies, and professionals who will be available to work with their students and/or their families as problems arise. This position sits within their decision-making strategy and process that they have developed, and clearly delineated at this section. It evidences the composition and reporting structure of those who have oversight of the grant, at different levels and what each is responsible for. This seems likely to build the capacity of staff achieve goals.

They provided information on the annual performance measures for college-and-career ready graduates. The measures are ambitious and achievable, moving from 74% in 2011-2012 to 100% 2017-2018.

IARSS' submission for Competitive Preference Priority is rich in ideas. It is imaginative, too, in how ideas might be realized. The scope of the undertaking, nevertheless seems a significant challenge. If it were to be pursued in its entirety, it seems it would exert added pressures, especially on educators who would already be tasked with far reaching demands, as per the other parts of this RTTTD.

Still, overall, this submission does provide evidence of how IARSS would integrate resources outside their schools to augment resources within the consortium schools to achieve their goals.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

They have a well developed and well articulated vision for reform. The Great-8 design they developed coherently and comprehensively addressed how they will build on core educational assurances. They have delineated:

The programs and strategies that they discussed for the personalization of strategies, tools and supports for students and educators that are aligned to graduation and college and career readiness seem likely to lead to learning environments that will significantly improve learning and teaching. Their 21 Century Classroom for example evidences a planned acquisition, deployment and training on using electronic resources that seem likely to transform the teaching and learning experience; developments seem likely to extend beyond the term of the RTTTD grant.

Their plan conceive of every student as a high need student and provide extensive strategies for involving parents, students, and educators to implement teaching and learning strategies that will be differentiated by individual students. This

is likely to reach all students, although they did not demonstrate how they would meet the needs of all subgroups; they also did not provide a focused discussion for the absence of this detail. Their top level approach, nonetheless, provides confidence in their ability to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student, and thereby decrease achievement gaps.

There are provisions for individual and collective teacher professional development and evaluation and principal evaluations. This includes the Danielson Framework for teachers and teachers working in professional learning communities to plan, monitor and develop strategies for meeting students' individual needs. They also have incentives, like offering degrees in exchange for commitment to remaining within their schools that seem likely to be well received by existing teachers and work to recruit, develop, reward and retain them. This in turn seems likely to expand student access to the most effective educators

They seem to have the support of the community and a range of stakeholders, and conditions in their state seem to be supportive and conducive to the implementation of their plan. For example the state is a RTTT state, and is argued to be aggressively implementing strategies for change.

Hence, IARSS' plan seems likely to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Their plan meets the Absolute Priority.

Total	210	167
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0017IL-3 for Sandoval C.U.S.D. #501

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1) The applicant has developed a research-based, comprehensive plan for reforming the targeted rural schools in this consortium. As part of this plan, they used a systematic evaluation process to determine the causes and reasons for inadequate academic success. Their theory of change includes eight (8) solid, strategic elements which create the basis of a reform system and assessment plan to support the four core educational assurance areas. This plan describes a succinct and reasonable 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.

Within these eight elements are reasonable provisions addressing core area #1, adopting and aligning and college and career ready standards and assessments. For example, this effort will be accomplished through job embedded professional development for teachers with onsite coaches to ensure instruction is appropriately focused. Other solid features are the inclusion of learning targets identified for every classroom and teacher use of end of grade/course exams to ensure that standards are addressed and mastered.

The applicant also adequately addresses core area #2. Specifically, data systems will be put into place that allow measurement of student growth and success, such as periodic progress assessments to determine and address overall student achievement gaps.

The applicant discusses core assurance area #3 by indicating that they will use a portion of the funds to provide incentives and innovative opportunities for new and existing staff. However, it is unclear what types of rewards will be available for these educators.

For core assurance area #4, the applicant advocates for the use of their reformative model, the GREAT-8 (Genuine Reform for Education, Assessment and Teaching) to provide opportunities for every student to succeed and turn around their lowest achieving schools. In addition, the applicant sets an ambitious goal of all students entering and succeeding in college or the workforce. It is noteworthy that the applicant includes high target goals for completion of postsecondary education as outlined and discussed in selection criteria B.

(c) The applicant is proactively planning for a technology-rich classroom, complete with the latest technology soft- and hardware. For example, students will use word processing, email, presentation software, mobile devices, and web-based applications to enhance their learning, much of which will be project-based. Dual credit/online classes will be available for high school students to ease transition as they matriculate to postsecondary education. Wrap around service such as mental health and social services will be planned for tier 2 and 3 students and each student will have an individualized learning plan that reflects their career interests and training. It is worthy to note that when students graduate they will have a fully developed resume which can be given to colleges or employers.

The applicant receives a high rating for this selection criterion.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)The applicant applied a logical and satisfactory approach to the selection of the schools for the consortium. (a) Specifically, their first step was to determine that the schools were aligned with the eligibility requirements for RTT-D. The second step was to investigate the establishment of partnerships with schools that had both a successful history in school improvement and demonstrated progressive ideas. The rationale for this process was to allow those schools with prior experience to help mentor the others in implementing best practices by using a train-the-trainer model for key staff within each school for sustainability. Once eligibility and mentoring requirements were met, permission to participate was achieved through each participant’s school board and/or union voting.

(b) The applicant provided an adequate listing of the schools that will participate in the grant activities as required for this sub-criterion.

(c) The applicant provided the required total numbers of participating students (2790) and included those of low-income (1817), high-need (2233), and total number of educators (223) in the five schools selected. It is worthy to note that all five schools are considered low income, from 50% to 87% of students are low income and a high number (2233 of 2790) of participating students in all schools are considered high-needs students. The grade span varies, with two schools containing grades 9-12, and three schools containing PreK-12 students. These characteristics represent schools with a wide array of challenging and varied factors to be considered in implementation of the reform efforts.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

(A)(3) The applicant appropriately references their theory of change to address this selection criterion. This is grounded in their eight (8) strategic elements (Great-8 Design) which create the basis of their reform system and assessment plan to support the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant aptly notes, and visually depicts, that this Great-8 Design was developed to structure goals, objectives, and outcomes through a closed loop improvement process. The applicant succinctly describes how this grant would be used to provide the funds needed develop the required curriculum, develop the assessment system and measure the results, purchase the required technology, and establish programs that will provide the necessary supports.

The applicant includes the elements of a high-quality plan (called Timeline Year) for LEA reform and change as required for this selection criterion in their four-year timeline chart. Specifically, the timeline plan outlines the key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables/outcomes, and parties responsible for implementing the activities. The applicant establishes the credibility of the plan for this criterion through their discussion of this framework and rationale for the activities.

Following this design, the applicant states that the project can be easily scaled up to include other districts by following their systematic approach and closed loop improvement process. The applicant does not discuss any specific plans to scale up this project for their consortium which is composed of selected rural, low income schools from different districts in the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendent of Schools Consortium (IARSS).

As the applicant's plan for scaling up lacks the specificity required for this response, the applicant receives a mid-range score for this selection criterion.

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

(A)(4) The applicant provided ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets overall and by student subgroup. Student subgroups are regular education, special education, and low income for reading and math. These include (a) performance on state assessments, (b) decreasing the achievement gaps for special education students and low income students, (c) graduation rates, (d) college enrollment, and most noteworthy (e) postsecondary degree attainment. These annual goals are succinctly presented in table form. An example of goals include: 90% or more of all low income third grade and eight grade students in the five schools will meet or exceed state targets in reading and math in the post grant year of 2017-2018. Also, projected graduation rates targets are set for 93-95% for all participating schools by the 2017-2018 post grant year. The applicant sets long range goals by the college enrollment targets for each participating school ranging from 82%-89%. Creditably, as a commitment to ensure that all student are successful, the applicant has set postsecondary degree attainment ranging from 72%-78% for the consortium schools. This represents 2-3% points of growth each year overall from the baseline year. Also, projected graduation rates targets are set for 93-95% for all participating schools by the 2017-2018 post grant year representing 2-4% growth overall from the baseline year. The applicant sets long range goals by the college enrollment targets for each participating school ranging from 82%-89%. This represents a healthy target growth of 5-7% overall, reachable with intensive instructional focus described in this proposal. Creditably, as a commitment to ensure that all student are successful, the applicant has set postsecondary degree attainment ranging from 72%-78% for the consortium schools. These are projections, with no baseline currently available. The applicant's strategies and progressive goals are impressive and grounded in research and will likely result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

The applicant receives a high score on this selection criterion.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1) The applicant has conclusively demonstrated a clear track record of success of student achievement in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. In fact, student achievement growth is particularly notable in the low income group both in reading and math.

(a) For example, the reading achievement gap between low income and non-low income has been reduced from 28.8 over the past four years to 15.8, while the math achievement gap has been reduced from 28.8 to 13.2 for the same groups. The applicant reports that the special education subgroup was too small to accurately gauge improvement. In addition, a graphic provided by the applicant shows upward trends of graduation rates in four of the five schools over the last four years. Actual percentages are difficult to read on the provided graphic. Also, it is not clear what are the college enrollment increase trends, as no graphics or specifics were provided. Instead, the applicant provided a statement indicating that four of five schools in the consortium have "impacted" high school graduation and college enrollment.

(b) The applicant reports other ambitious and significant reforms in the five schools in the consortium over the last four years. For example, the district has committed to providing students with expanded learning opportunities particularly for low income students. A particular focus is bridging the gap between high school and college. This is especially needed in the five rural districts, many of whom have students who are the first generation to attend college. Each consortium school has appropriately addressed this need through specific activities such as college prep programs, dual enrollment courses, vocational centers, online courses and by linking with the local community colleges. Students and families are solidly supported by offering college and career counseling, guidance on student loans and scholarships, and information on post-

secondary options.

(c) The applicant concisely reports that they are actively engaged in the process of making student performance data accessible to students, parents, and educators to be used to inform and improve educational practices. As a model example, the applicant reports that data-based decision-making is embedded in instructional practice and requires that student performance data be available to students, educators and parents through a web-based parent portal. This data is analyzed on a regular basis through summative and formative assessments to determine student and curricular improvements.

The applicant demonstrates a clear track record of success in improving learning outcomes. The amount of decrease in achievement gaps is particularly impressive. More specific information is needed on the track record for graduation and college enrollment rates. The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

5

1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(2) In order to frequently assess the participating schools' progress, the applicant's proposal calls for a high bar - 100% transparency through reporting of relevant data to help progress at points in time. Specifically, surveys will be used to routinely assess the progress and evaluation questionnaires will be completed at each parent event.

However, the information on transparency provided by the applicant in the proposal is related to the use of improvement and perception data, not transparency in categories of school-level expenditures. The applicant did not directly address sub criteria (a) – (d) of this selection criterion.

The applicant receives a score within the low range on this selection criterion.

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

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3) The applicant reports a significant state history of laws and regulations supporting personalized learning. The applicant explicitly discusses three key state strategies for supporting and accelerating school district implementation of personalized learning environments: 1) the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE), 2) the Illinois Pathways Initiative (IPI), and 3) the Rising Star Continuous Improvement System (RSCIS). For example, the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE) provides a common data and technology platform for Illinois school districts to support personalized learning and access high quality instructional resources. In addition, the applicant reports that the state is committed to utilizing ISLE as its long-term, statewide technical infrastructure to support personalized learning and supports in each district.

As another example of flexibility, the state expanded the autonomy of school districts to promote personalized learning through the authorization of local curricular options and remote educational programs.

The applicant receives a high rating for this selection criterion.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4) The applicant reports substantial stakeholder engagement in the development and support of the proposal. (a) For example, students, parents, community and business groups participated in surveys, meetings, and focus groups regarding the content of the RTT-D proposal. It was also reported that these groups were very responsive and provided insights from their own perspective. Student and parent surveys provided perceptions into student demographics, their concerns, and ways they were willing to help in the reform process. Each district utilized existing student groups for discussion of school improvement related to the goals of the grant proposal. The teacher organizations and principals in each district were approached in the early stages of planning and the grant requirements were explained, providing these stakeholders with time to express a voice in the decision making process.

(i) The applicant documents that four of the five participating schools had a teacher's union and full support. (ii) The fifth school, a non-union affiliated district, provided a letter of support from more than 70% of the teachers.

(b) It is apparent that the applicant sought meaningful input from a wide variety of stakeholders as they developed this

grant proposal. Numerous organization and groups were listed in support of this reform effort. These include: Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), Illinois Principals Association (IPA), Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU-C), Shawnee Community College, Kaskaskia College, Southern Illinois Healthcare, parents and/or residents of the districts, teachers of the districts and students of the districts. As an additional form of commitment, a stakeholder from each of the consortium schools was selected to act as the project supporter and organize a governing structure.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has devised a comprehensive approach to personalized learning and improved teaching to ensure all students graduate college-and career-ready.

(C)(1)(a)(i) The applicant described several enduring strategies that they will use to help students understand what they are learning is key to their future success. For example, they will use the development of Individual Learning Plans to teach students to understand the importance of what they are learning to their future goals. These plans will be developed for each student with the help of the student and the student’s support team (guidance counselor, parent, and teacher). The applicant reports that the goal of the process is to enable all students to understand the importance of what they are learning in order to reach their full potential.

(C)(1)(a)(ii) The applicant succinctly notes that students will meet with their teachers, counselors and other supportive adults to determine, assess, and chart their student goals. Specifically, progress toward their goals will be reviewed during each school year by students and their support team to determine what resources and tools they need to be prepared for life after graduation. It is worthy to note that individualized profiles will be created for each student that can be used as a guide by parents and teachers to allow students to reach their college- and career-ready goals.

(C)(1)(a)(iii) The applicant reports that students will be provided a full overview of the learning environment and exposed to academic activities that closely align with their interests as demarcated by their profile. More information is needed to clearly understand how this will occur and the scope of this process.

(C)(1)(a)(iv) The applicant stated that they will provide a variety of curriculum and educational delivery options, specifically use of technology that includes exposure to culture, contexts and perspectives aimed at motivating the student while personalizing their learning.

(C)(1)(a)(v) The applicant notes that the ability for a student to master critical academic content is directly related to how the individual learns and the learning tools available. Additionally, the applicant advocates that it is crucial that their students have the skills necessary to become productive citizens and graduate with the traits of goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem solving; however, activities or processes geared toward teaching of these skills were not clearly articulated.

C)(b)(i) The applicant sufficiently reports that the GREAT-8 Design has several strategies to provide a personalized sequence of instructional content as well as a greater degree of flexibility than with traditional learning environments. For example, it is noted that the planned 21st Century Classroom will provide students and teachers with a greater selection of instructional tools designed to help develop skills and learning at a personalized pace. In the applicant’s plan, students will learn at their own pace, have access to information through various internet search engines, and use a variety of learning and assessment tools to further their education. The justification is that students are more likely to take responsibility for their learning if they have the tools they can relate to and understand. Furthermore, it is commendable that individualized learning plans include safety nets to ensure students develop their skills at an individualized pace and as well as assessment tools to enable students to graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

(C)(b)(ii-iii) The applicant aptly reports on a wide variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments. They note that all curricular areas, aligned to the common core state standards (CCSS), will be delivered using new technology that allows for flexible learning methodologies. They cite, for example, the flipped classroom in which the student can watch a lesson from home and then can have assistance from the teacher the next day on their homework assignment. For another example, the applicant describes distance learning which provides exposure to other students, classrooms, and cultures and where they can participate in coursework such as science, language, history, and local culture. The applicant additionally reports the planned use of varied forms of technology such as Kindles, Nooks, and Google Chrome Books. Numerous communication avenues such as word processing, e-mail, presentation software, and other collaboration tools combined with learning skills in core subjects are also cited. The applicant strongly emphasizes that a key element and incentive in their instructional approach to prepare students for college and to turn around their lowest achieving schools is the offering of dual credit courses to help them make the transition from high school to college.

(C)(b)(iv)(A) The applicant will use a sophisticated platform, the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE), to provide a common data and technology source to support personalized learning, track student performance data, and access high-quality instructional resources. This will enable the applicant to efficiently use the available dashboard application to track and report the learning progress of individual students and groups of students. As part of this process, individual student data will be entered on a regular basis to allow both teacher and student to track progress frequently and determine college readiness.

(C)(b)(iv)(B) The applicant aptly reports that each teacher will have the ability to enter personalized learning recommendations on the student's progress record to suggest content, learning methodologies, instructional approaches and to fine-tune the individualized learning plans. It is note-worthy that students will have open access to the system and weekly counseling hours will be established where the teachers will be available analyze this data and provide feedback on the student's individualized progress.

(C)(1)(b)(v) The applicant views the instructional approach they are developing as similar to universal design concepts stating their approach may accommodate even the most high-need students. In addition, in Section (D)(1)(e) the applicant discusses in detail various supports available to students as well as foundational beliefs that clearly link such instructional design concepts to the applicant's visionary instructional model. Examples include varied pacing options and rapid, differentiated support for students who fall behind.

(C)(1)(c) The applicant succinctly reports that they will create training materials to ensure that all students, parents, and teachers understand the tools and resources available to tracking and managing the students' learning progress. Specifically, such tools include written, audio, and audio-visual materials that can be retrieved through the ISLE training platform module as needed.

Although the applicant provided a wealth of information to support the requirements of this selection criteria, they did not clearly link the elements of a high-quality plan with this content. Specifically, the criterion calls for key goals, activities and rationale for the activities, the timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing instructional strategies for all participating students need to be more clearly articulated.

The applicant receives a high mid-range score on this criterion.

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

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a)(i) The applicant clearly describes aspects of their teaching and learning that have a very specific and significant impact on student achievement. For example, the project contains a professional development element to ensure that teachers and educators are prepared to support the implementation of personalized learning environments as well as the associated strategies. The plan includes the training of all educators in the use of new tools such as choice boards, problem based learning, tiered learning targets and mobile devices that are aimed at personalized instruction.

(C)(2)(a)(ii) The applicant sufficiently reports that the project will focus on individualization through adapting content and instruction to respond to student academic needs, academic interests, and learning styles. They verify that feedback from surveys show this area is a particular weakness in the participating schools and note that the development of techniques, strategies and materials supporting this will of major prominence in the project. More information is needed on what types of techniques, strategies and materials may be incorporated in this effort.

(C)(2)(a)(iii) The applicant sufficiently reports that they will make continuous adjustments to address individual progress throughout the student's educational career. For example, the plan requires that every teacher records student progress data on a regular basis in order to monitor that the student stays on path for acceleration or improvement for college- and career-readiness. Teachers will review the data in grade level and curriculum area professional learning communities (PLC's) and this information will be shared with the students and their parents to enlist their support in reaching the students' goals. It is admirable to note that this process will take place at all grade levels from elementary through high school. The data will be used to fine-tune individualized learning plans and progress reports as well as to look at teaching and learning trends among educators. To institutionalize this effort, the applicant reports that participating schools have already adjusted weekly schedules to allow uninterrupted PLC time.

(C)(2)(a)(iv) The applicant appropriately notes that one element of their GREAT-8 Design plan focuses on teachers, principals, and superintendent evaluations that will be used to improve teacher and administrator effectiveness. The applicant specifically discusses the teacher and principal evaluation plans which include several tools and resources designed to help these educators identify the best individualized learning approaches that can be quickly implemented to help students remain on track towards meeting academic goals and interests. The frequency of the feedback from the evaluations is unclear and whether this feedback is focused on the individual or if it provides measures for collective effectiveness.

(C)(2)(b)(i) The applicant details the use of STEM programs as a key method to address student engagement and optimal individualization of learning. Their premise is that a student's exposure to STEM coursework before college and career entrance encourages differentiated pathways of continuing education. For example, the applicant notes that the concepts taught in the STEM courses connect different learning domains and lead students to be better understanding of the world through science in every aspect of life. The applicant plans to make STEM training a priority as trained STEM educators will help their colleagues in English/Language Arts and Social Science to make connections supporting the common core standards and the development of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science progression maps. More information is needed to understand if training and support will be provided in additional techniques to optimize learning other than STEM concepts.

(C)(2)(b)(iii) The applicant thoroughly describes how they will put the required processes and tools into place to ensure that student needs are being met. For example, they plan to conduct a longitudinal study with students and educators to identify the components that best serve the needs of the educational community. Students and educators will be surveyed regarding their educational needs and report on their opinion regarding progress or class choices. Other sources of information to be used include reviews of longitudinal standardized test results for individual students, rates and types of secondary and postsecondary coursework completion in high school, and successful use of technology. The applicant plans to disseminate this information possibly at local, regional and national meetings.

(C)(2)(c)(i-ii) As mentioned in previous selection criterion, the applicant adequately reports that they will use teachers, principals, and superintendent evaluations in order to improve teacher and administrator effectiveness and to ensure their competencies regarding a comprehensive learning process. The data gathered through evaluations will be used to provide key information regarding the need for corrective actions. In addition, the applicant aptly notes that training, systems change, and the implementation of practices necessary for continuous school improvement toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps must be carefully monitored. To do so, the applicant will utilize the state instrument, Rising Star, or AdvancedED, as the structures to review the comprehensive continuous improvement process. These tools will guide districts and schools through the procedures and practices for systemic change and instructional improvement. All Consortium districts will submit school improvement plans and each plan will be monitored at the school and district level to insure continuity of continuous school improvement. The applicant also details plans to

utilize existing partnerships and those under development to provide sources for the training needs of its partners. Specifically, the applicant is exploring the use of local community colleges as extension centers for the college. In addition to the dual credit and onsite escrow classes already planned, the participating schools would act as another campus sites where community college students and faculty would meet before or after the regular high school day.

(C)(2)(d) The applicant is operating from a solid, fundamental position that using high-quality, researched professional development focused on areas where the need for improvement is indicated will lead to increasing the number of highly effective teachers and principals to provide instruction to all students. Specifically, the applicant promises emphasis on improvements and retention of teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas and in special education. The applicant also references the professional development component of Response to Intervention as a strategy to increase the number of highly effective teachers and principals to provide instruction to all students. In addition, in order to further address personnel supply and demand in the state, including recruitment and retention, the applicant intends to follow the state's lead and partner with teacher preparation institutions of higher learning (IHE's) and LEAs through such programs as the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) and the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program (INPM).

Overall, the applicant described a solid design and approach for ensuring personalization of the learning environment to enable students to access high-quality instruction, strategies, and materials. However, the applicant did not clearly link this approach to the elements of a high quality plan. Specifically, the key goals, activities and rationale, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible were not discussed, as required in this selection criterion, to enable the overall credibility of the plan to be assessed.

The applicant receives a high mid-range score for this selection criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)(a) The applicant offers robust assurance to conduct a policy review with all of the local school boards and to make an analysis of the infrastructure of each district in order to create the necessary changes to implement the plans of this grant proposal. Specifically, partnerships will be developed with the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Principals Association, and the Illinois Education Association to address the needs at all levels of the school system that will support continuous school improvement infrastructure. The commitment includes making school performance and student achievement a top priority when evaluating resources, with the goals of making the best use of the educational staff and reducing non-educational costs.

(D)(1)(b) The applicant is clearly committed to a school-site leadership team. The leadership team they describe is composed of educators, parents, community partners, and others responsible for creating a shared vision for the school, identifying desired results and helping align and integrate the work of partners with the school. Additionally, the applicant stresses that the team will be given flexibility and autonomy by the local board of education to use data in leading project activates within the school. They also specify that leadership teams will be given some control over school schedules, calendars, and school personnel decisions. They also will be allowed flexibility in the school budget to move monies from one budget category to another to support the needs of students. Local school boards have agreed to delegate sufficient flexibility and authority to the leadership teams to provide continuous data on school performance. This is a significant use of the local leadership teams and should streamline decision-making and increase response time for student improvement.

(D)(1)(c) In order to give students the opportunity to progress and earn competency-based credits, the applicant emphasizes the pledge to provide great flexibility with respect to individualized learning plans. For example, a student can accelerate or spend as much time as needed on a subject. The application is also committed to supporting competency-based pathways to provide methods to certify the learning of standards outside of school and subject-based seat time. This flexibility is based on the rationale that these competency-based pathways provide opportunities for students to advance through content or earn credit toward high school graduation regardless of age or whether in class, online, or in an off campus setting.

(D)(1)(d) The applicant also proactively affirms the practice of student reinforcement of subject matters through alternative and individualized assessment strategies. For example, teachers will be given the flexibility to use multiple alternative testing practices as a form of student performance grading that allows for a more all-inclusive approach to student assessment. Students will be able to generate their own responses rather than simply selecting from a given list of options, promoting higher-order thinking skills. The applicant reports that types of alternative assessments will vary citing essay responses, oral presentations, portfolios of compiled work, short answer questions, and demonstrations of a concept or strategy. Teachers will provide assistance to improve the study skills of students who are learning the alternative assessment methods.

(D)(1)(e) The applicant provided a wide array of various learning styles and strategies that could be used to reinforce learning resources including distance learning, digital content, and dual credit courses. The applicant notes that these resources are easily adaptable to the students' individualized learning and learning style and will be made fully accessible to all students. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery via progress monitoring through frequent and varied formative assessments.

Overall, although the applicant provided detailed information to support their commitment to flexibility and increased autonomy in policies and infrastructure, they did not link this information to the elements of a high-quality plan for this selection criterion. Specifically, as required by this criterion, a high-quality plan should identify the key goals, activities and rationale, timeline, and persons' responsible for developing or restructuring these policies and infrastructure to allow an assessment of credibility of the plan.

The applicant receives a high mid-range score.

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2)(a) The applicant clearly affirms that the participating schools will appropriately serve all students, educators, parents and associated stakeholders without regard to income or any other personal factors. Specifically, the applicant reports that all students will have access to the content, tools, and resources necessary to measure individual results and ensure students are progressing towards college- and career-readiness. For example, the use of technology such as on-line tools will help provide access to educational resources after regular school hours. Additionally, Full Service Community Schools will provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members. The applicant notes that such school models that have shown to result in improved educational outcomes for children. It is unclear if all of the participating schools will become Full Service Community Schools.

(D)(2)(b) The applicant proactively commits that provisions for technical support will be provided through several avenues to all teachers, students and parents to reach their goal of 100% access and understanding of available technology tools. For example, frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be available on the district website. In addition, the applicant will encourage the support of community user groups and provide group training, training videos, and a technical support team for consortium schools. It is commendable that the applicant will go to great lengths to provide outreach to parents on how to access their child's educational data. For example, the schools will hold parent trainings and technical provide assistance during after-school hours. For families that do not have access to the internet or a computer at home, the schools' computers and internet will be available during the evenings.

(D)(2)(c) The applicant sufficiently reports that all of the data from the schools' information technology system will be made available in a standard format to allow importation into third-party analysis tools. Different forms of technology will be used such as e-mail, text messages, and web-based data systems to make it easier for families to gain access to their student's data. Families will have access to data about their child's attendance, development of academic skills, and progress to grade expectations and college- and career-readiness standards.

D)(2)(d) The applicant provides robust assurance that the schools' data systems will comply with program rules for interoperability necessary to ensure data can be shared across all schools. This will allow data to flow easily from one system to another and ensure data are in a non-proprietary, open format. The applicant points to a familiar model of data

accessibility with which the schools are accustomed, the state of Illinois data system (IIRC – Illinois Interactive Report Card). In this model, human resource data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data is available for each school district.

For this selection criterion, the applicant described detailed policies and infrastructure to support project implementation. However, the applicant did not adequately link these polices and infrastructure to the elements of a high quality plan. Specifically, a high-quality plan for this criterion should include key goals, activities and rationale, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible to enable the overall credibility of the plan to be assessed.

The applicant receives a midrange score for this selection criterion

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(1) The applicant described a robust, research-based continuous improvement process. Stakeholders will be apprised of the progress of grant implementation and student success through print, electronic media, informational meetings, parent/student conferences, and the district website. The applicant intends to use a recurring six-step process to expedite the monitoring of continuous improvement. As a continuous looping process, participating schools will identify and institutionalize core beliefs, determine gaps over time, determine and enact appropriate interventions and needed professional development, and promote a sense of shared responsibility for student improvement. Teacher input on grant implementation and needed actions will be regularly obtained through such methods as polling. Teacher teams will meet to review and modify curriculum plans and practices based on student progress. The applicant reports that the continuous improvement process will be reviewed annually through a variety of assessment tools (such as checklists, random interviews of students, teachers, Board members, parents, and focus group discussions) by the RTT-D Grant Administration Team using a nationally known, research-based electronic scoring and reporting instrument. Individual student progress plans will be developed and monitored through daily student intervention group sessions. Moreover, quarterly formative assessments will be administered inform enrichment or re-teaching. The applicant reports that stakeholders know the expectation through print, electronic media, signage, informational meetings, and parent/student conferences.</p> <p>Although elements of the plan are present in the Timeline the applicant presented at the beginning of the applicant, information clearly detailing the linkages of this continuous improvement process to the elements of a high-quality plan is needed.</p> <p>The applicant receives a high mid-range score for this selection criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(2) The applicant presented an extensive plan for communication with internal and external stakeholders. Specifically, this includes annual informational meetings with parents to explain the program, parental outreach through personal or phone interviews, and open quarterly meetings at off-site community locations. There will be monthly newsletters sent by email and posted on the schools' websites and printed for community distribution. The leadership team will also communicate electronically as needed. Other methods of communication and engagement include presentations at educational conferences and other venues where constituents gather. Student involvement includes such activities as production of videos on timely events, topics and grant progress to be distributed over the school's electronic network.</p> <p>Student involvement includes such activities as production of videos on timely events, topics and grant progress to be distributed over the school's electronic network. Teachers will conduct mid-term checks on students and weekly eligibility checks. As additional commitment to, and engagement with, the grant activities, schools will submit a monthly progress report to local print or radio media and weekly progress reports to the Board of Education.</p> <p>Although the applicant presented a well-thought out communication plan, information clearly detailing the linkages of this communication plan to the elements of a high-quality plan is needed.</p> <p>The applicant receives a high score for this selection criterion.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(3) The applicant submitted tables to document their selected 12-14 performance measures, but did not provide descriptions or narratives to explain (a-c) sub-criteria. It is unclear what the (a) rationale was for selecting that measure, (b) how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern and (c) how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p> <p>Concerning the performance measures selected, the applicant shows a solid pattern of anticipated increases for all students for on track to college- and career-readiness. However, the applicant noted that baseline information for determining the number of highly effective teachers and principals and effective teachers and principals was not currently available. The applicant selected three subgroups of students to include all participating, low income, and special education. In three of the groups, there is little or no change anticipated in reading scores for two-three years for 6th – 8th grade. The specific performance measure for career readiness selected for grade 11 by the applicant was unclear.</p> <p>There are two instance where very low percentages are listed (out of character with the pattern of increase) for the 12th grade special education graduation rates and the number of participating students on track for SY 2016-2017. It is troubling that the numbers of office referrals for low income students remains high after four years of grant activities (although the numbers are projected to be cut in half).</p> <p>The applicant receives a low rating for this selection criterion.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(4) Although the applicant did not specifically address their plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities in this section, the applicant does provide information and timelines throughout the application that describe their GREAT-8 Design. Specifically, the applicant includes elements in the Design that address instructional strategies (professional development for curriculum and effective teaching), personalized learning plans (plans for students), evaluations (teacher/principal effectiveness), 21st Century Classrooms (technology use in the classroom), and recruitment (leadership opportunities). Additionally, there are avenues for collaboration with community partners for programs of study, shared resources, supports (full service schools and active community councils), and modification of school schedules and structures to accommodation professional learning communities and Response to Intervention (RtI) interventions.</p> <p>As the applicant does not address the rigor of the GREAT-8 design, they receive a low range score for this selection criterion.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(1) The applicant provided an appropriate budget narrative and tables to justify expenditures. Specifically,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant reports that they will use RTT-D, school improvement grants, Title I and Title II monies for professional development. RTT-D, school improvement and Title I and LEA monies will be used for personnel; RTT-D, school improvement grants and Title I monies will be used for equipment, RTT-D; school improvement grants, Title I and LEA monies will be used for supplies and materials; and RTT-D and school improvement grants will be 		

used for contractual services.

(b) The project budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The budget is clearly thought out and leverages existing funding as well as cost-sharing among schools in an adequate manner. For example, two of the five districts currently have school Improvement grants and will direct a portion of those funds to grant activities. For justification of expenditures, the budget is organized around the elements of the proposal design (GREAT-8 Design). The project-level budget narrative details the expenditures and itemizes cost per project element.

(c)(i) The applicant provides sufficient information to understand the use of the proposed budget monies he funds that will be used to support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant is requesting \$10,000,000 from the grant proposal, will provide and additional \$100,000 from other sources for a total revenue of \$100,100,000 from these sources.

(ii) The applicant notes technology equipment as primarily a one-time expense and budget \$1,500,000 for this for four years. Expenditures for professional development with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments are sustained throughout the four years of the project.

The applicant receives a high rating for this selection criterion.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discussed nonfinancial support for sustainability of the project after grant funding ends. The plan is to put into place sufficient internal institutional structures for capacity building and personnel commitment that the practices of continuous improvement and student growth will be self-sustaining. Specific budgetary commitment was not addressed, nor were the elements of a high-quality plan needed for sustainability of the project's goals after the grant period ends. Specific commitments and support from state and local government was not addressed in this section; however, letters of support (excluding financial support) from various state and local leaders were included in the appendix.

The applicant receives a low rating on this selection criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1)The applicant reports that they will maintain their current partnerships with the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS), Southern Illinois University, and the Shawnee Development Council while they will establish new partnerships with agencies as public health, social service providers, businesses, civic groups, early learning programs, special education cooperatives, post-secondary institutions, and faith based organizations to support the many essentials of high-needs students.

(2) It is commendable that the applicant has provided high level post-marks along the way to establish on-track indicators for students and well as how the partnership agencies fit into that design. For example, the goals of the applicant are for students to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school, exit third grade reading at grade level, and graduate from high school college and career ready while family and community supports the student. Some of the partnership and intended results are: Early Childhood/Head Start - Students enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school. Mental Health - Students are on target to graduation. Social and emotional stability allows them to focus on educational goals. Extension/Dairy Council Nutrition Programs - Students are healthy and receive the proper nutrition and exercise. Community Colleges, Adult Education Programs - Students are career ready upon graduation. Continuing education and job skills training.

(3)(a) The applicant succinctly reports that indicators will be tracked utilizing the personal learning plan for each student. The follow-up on each student will indicate the need for continuing interventions or additional interventions and partners that will address the situation. A data management system will be used to record interventions.

(3)(b) The applicant has a thorough plan for collecting data on students. The data collected in the personalized learning plan will provide guidance for the type of support the student will need. Individual goals for students, based on their action plans, will be monitored using a data system that integrates with the action plans of the First Responders Team, similar to the Rising Star system. Each student's special needs will be documented and individualized based on this plan of need so that all students will have their needs met, regardless of how great or little the need.

(3)(c) The applicant affirms that they will scale up the project to other high-need students and indicates that much of their population is comprised of this population. They plan to do this through strengthening their community and regional partnerships; however, the

specifics strategies and details for this scale-up model were unclear.

(3)(d) The applicant's data table of goals for improved student outcomes provides a clear and substantial vision of what the applicant projects to accomplish in the four years of the grant. For example, the applicant intends to improve reading overall for 3rd grade students from a baseline year (SY 2011-2012) of 65% to post-grant year (SY 2017-2018) of 91%.

(4) The applicant describes a well-thought out plan for integration of services with other partners. To do so, the applicant plans to initiate a model similar to a medical model. A "first responders' type of critical care" team will be formed at each school with networking partners and will review student data to generate an action plan for student success. Community forums will be held quarterly focusing on the various services that are available to assist students or families in need.

(5)(a) The applicant's comprehensive data system is designed to provide a wide variety of information to help assess the needs and assets of students. Family needs related to supporting the student toward school success will be addressed by providing appropriate service linkages. Various services will present a summary of their agency's services and provide contact information at a Community Forum. Individual goals for students, based on their action plans, will be monitored using a data system that integrates with the action plans of the First Responders Team.

(5)(b) The applicant fully describes the process that they will use to identify and keep current the information on community resources. The community outreach/liason coordinator to create and keep an up-to-date list of community service providers, agencies, and professionals. Resource information with description of various services, location and contact persons will be provided to each school. Communication regarding the availability of these resources will be made via school website and school publications. In addition, the First Responders will conduct quarterly reviews to check that student's action plans on track. Students and their families will complete a surveys to determine their satisfaction with services.

(5)(c) The applicant has created a clear decision-making process and infrastructure to address existing and new structures, processes, and products. This was visually displayed through a hierarchical chart of personnel responsible from top management to school level and student level instructors and support staff. Within each school building, the First Responders Team report to the District Grant Administrator within that building. Decisions recommended for action are sent to the building principal and/or superintendent to arrive at a collaborative decision that considers available resources, policy requirements and grant sustainability consideration.

(5)(d) The applicant reports a proactive approach to keeping parents informed and part of the decision-making process concerning their child. For example, the school will conduct regular parent-teacher meetings to keep the parents and families involved in both discussing new methodologies as well as the decision-making process for adding additional services aimed at improving overall college readiness. This includes individual interviews, parent conferences and a quarterly meeting of the parent advisory council.

(5)(e) The applicant reports that transparency is a vital part of the project, and surveys will be used to routinely assess the progress affected by the grant. In addition, evaluation questionnaires will be completed at each parent event. Parents to complete the Family Engagement Tool, provided by the Illinois State Board of Education to gather information on a variety of school-related activities. It is unclear if there will be addition sources of assessment that might capture the opinions of staff and community partners.

(6) The applicant sufficiently described their annual performance measures and desired results for students of the proposed population level. The included seven different measures ranging from birth to adulthood and a variety of types of results. Specifically education, mental health, community health, special education, community colleges and early childhood results were included.

In summary, the applicant enjoys two significant partnerships and is planning for more to sustain the activities of the

proposal. They have established high level post-marks along the way to establish on-track indicators for students and well as how the partnership agencies fit into that design. Grant indicators for success will be tracked utilizing the personal learning plan for each student which will provide guidance for the type of support the student will need. The applicant's data table of goals for improved student outcomes provides a clear and substantial vision of what the applicant projects to accomplish in the four years of the grant including the plan for integration of services with other partners which is similar to a medical mode of "first responders". The applicant's comprehensive data system is designed to provide a wide variety of information to help assess the needs and assets of students. The school will conduct regular parent-teacher meetings to keep the parents and families involved and surveys will be used to routinely assess the progress affected by the grant and to establish and maintain transparency in the project. Annual performance measures and desired results for students include seven different measures ranging from birth to adulthood and a variety of types of results. The specifics strategies and details for scaling-up this project were not articulated.

The applicant receives a high score for this competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sufficiently addressed how they would meet the core educational assurance areas. The applicant has developed a research-based, comprehensive plan, GREAT-8 Design, for reforming the targeted rural schools in this consortium. Their theory of change includes eight strategic elements, including extensive professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness and therefore increase students' access to effective teachers. This plan describes a sensible 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.

Within these eight elements are reasonable provisions for adopting and aligning and college and career ready standards and assessments. Other features are the inclusion of learning targets identified for every classroom and teacher use of end of grade/course exams to ensure that standards are addressed and mastered.

Data systems will be developed that measure student growth and success, such as periodic progress assessments to determine and address overall student achievement gaps.

The applicant sets an ambitious goal of all students entering and succeeding in college or the workforce. It is noteworthy that the applicant includes high target goals for completion of postsecondary education.

Total	210	156
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