



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0077NC-1 for Stanly County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes a credible approach to targeting transient student needs and attendance concerns through providing mobile learning labs in science and reading which is justified to support increasing academic settings for their students to reach the students in areas outside of the school setting through the learning lab delivery of services. The vision is coherent in providing creative strategies to deepen student learning and directed to turning around the lowest performing schools through mobile services and evening schools. A data system is in place to measure progress and the system as presented will provide further support for staff in identifying measured growth and progress in order to revise services and target student needs. Specific descriptions provide clear examples of how the mobile labs, evening school opportunities, and technology will enhance personalized learning for students. The plan addresses specific examples of what delivery of services will look like for students.

Although student activities to enhance and personalize the learning experience are viable and convincing, the activities of the professional development component are lacking details in describing the vision and activities of professional development in such a way that the professional development will work toward retaining and recruiting high quality staff. The proposal mentions a lack of equitable services across the district but does not appropriately address how the services will be delivered in such a way that all students in all schools will receive appropriate services. Specific strategies to retain teachers and involve leaders in schools where they are needed most are not addressed effectively. Data systems are stated as in development and to be built upon, however, the system to make this technology available to all staff, parents, and stakeholders is unclear.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All schools in the district will be served through the project activities. All schools qualify for Title I services and are identified as school wide Title I programs. Evidence is provided to identify each school and numbers and percentage of students in each sub group and whole school programs that will participate. The plan is a comprehensive proposal to provide services to all high needs students, their staff, and throughout the community. The proposal states that 100% of all participating students in the schools will be served. The proposal states that 100% of students in the district's schools will be served. The total number of teachers to be served is stated as 608 teachers.

It is unclear how many, percentages, and numbers of preschool students will be served at which school and in which sub categories. It is also not clear whether or not the percentage of students from low-income families and high-risk students will receive equitable services targeted to their specific needs. It is not clear if the 608 educators identified for services are a large percentage of staff, the total number of staff and / or include school leaders although there is a target to improve 100% of staff effectiveness. A description is not provided to explain if the staff are representative of those most in need of training, support, and retention. The professional development goal to increase effectiveness in 100% of staff is not clearly identified by specific areas of improvement or by a well-described system for delivery beyond that of curriculum coaches working on site. A clarification of this information would provide a stronger rationale for the staff development component.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides a comprehensive plan to build upon existing efforts to increase college readiness through developing more personalized experiences to students. The plan described will improve student -learning outcomes through reasonable outcome goals built upon student interests and opportunities. This is a specific and focused proposal that will identify individual student needs, address their needs through personalized opportunities, and expand upon schedules that are in place to reach more students than during a traditional school day. Increasing student motivation through innovative activities is a strong approach to creating meaningful reform. Strategies, objectives, and a timeline for key goals are located in following sections of the proposal. Key personnel, objectives, and timelines are clearly identified.

The project does not include strategies for scaling up the services and activities in a credible manners, specifically professional development activities are vague and undefined and do not scale up the elements of growth for teachers and leaders to maintain the project goals and services over the course of the proposed activities. The evidence is lacking in explaining how teachers will be retained and recruited through professional development or throughout the timeline for activities. The district has identified that equitable services do not exist across and among the schools however there is no evidence that equitable services will be developed and maintained to provide the equitable services for all students.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes gradual and attainable rates of improvement in each of the goal areas presented: high school graduation, college readiness, literacy progress, STEM progress, and professional development. The project identifies assessment processes to measure growth and progress. The management system and staffing described present a highly likely scenario for successful implementation through careful monitoring of grant activities. Successmaker and EVAAS systems are described as in place to be built upon for increased use of data to inform instruction for teachers.

Although the activities to attain success in the areas listed: summative assessment improvement, decreasing gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment are defined; attainable and specific activities to reach improvement in those areas is not clear. Attainable goals are not ambitious goals. Current goals are based upon past results and upon data that has not yet been analyzed. Administrative effectiveness and administrative knowledge of the data systems and the administrative role in data analysis is not well described. The proposal does not indicate how this increased knowledge of data systems will assist teachers and students in attaining the measurable outcomes, nor does it describe the effects of teacher training upon retention of quality staff. The goals are presented as tied to their evaluations but not to their own identified training needs. The principal's role as data leaders is vague. Their role is only connected to specific areas of desired improvement.

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:

The district's proposal includes substantial evidence to demonstrate a track record of success for the district as a whole in grades 3-5 reading and increased literacy rates in high school. District wide evidence indicates substantial growth in addressing the needs of LEP students through success in exiting 19% of students from the program

Increased graduation rates overall is also cited as sufficient evidence to support a track record of success including increased graduation rates for students with disabilities across the district.

The district provides strong evidence that multiple strategies for sharing data with parents, teachers, and the community are in place including superintendent reports to the media , that are appropriate strategies for reaching low income parents who may not have access to technology.

One out of four middle schools, one out of two high schools and two elementary schools provide evidence of substantial increases in student achievement. However, this evidence does not indicate equitable growth for students in the remaining school sites. A weakness is also noted in college preparation rates across the district. The district cites that 7% of juniors are college ready. College enrollment data has yet to be collected to follow the success of students who enrolled in college.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal includes a description of appropriate strategies to support transparency in providing information on personnel reports, budget reports, and salaries and expenditures through the use of the radio and newspapers as well as a district web page where parents, staff, and community partners can access the information. Information is available in an annual financial report that includes employee, school, and district expenditures. The superintendent is listed as a source of information as requested to the general public and stakeholders. The proposal also states that it will communicate progress on each objective and related expenditures for the project to the public.</p>		
<p>The proposal is vague in demonstrating how the proposed new district web page will vary from the current web based programs for informing the stakeholders of budgetary notices and their connection to direct services to students and staff.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A comprehensive description from the state level to the classroom level of the context for implementation is provided. Evidence is clear that while being held accountable to core standards, the state provides sufficient flexibility to districts to allow for creative and innovative projects. The state department of education provides financial support for transportation, per pupil allotment, and a system to evaluate teacher effectiveness. The state department of education provides curriculum support and other professional development activities. The local school board provides flexibility to allow for personalization of instruction to students. The community serves as volunteers through participating in feedback groups and school improvement groups that address school funding needs. The state to district leadership to classroom involvement provides a strong approach to comprehensive support for innovative projects. The state provided the districts flexibility through an ESEA Waiver to support an educational reform known as the Ready Initiative.</p>		
<p>The proposal is unclear regarding the equitable access to effective teachers in their description of the selection of the most effective teachers to staff the mobile units and in describing that the most effective teachers are sent to conferences. This would appear to limit the access to teachers who may be the most in need and would indicate a lack of autonomy at the school level if indeed these decisions and selections are district level.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A self-study was completed that is sufficient evidence to demonstrate some level of engagement of stakeholders in developing the proposal. The district provides strong evidence of good working relationships with businesses and community organizations that provide a base for obtaining feedback and involvement. Letters of support are attached from a variety of local resources from businesses to non-profit organizations to medical personnel providing school physicals for athletes at no charge to the students or the district.</p>		
<p>The proposal indicates school based feedback from 70% of staff and administrators; however, it is vague in its description of the number of parents involved in the Parent Advisory Groups that provided feedback and how these groups are represented of all parents in the district. Numbers of parents involved in each participating school's parent advisory group are not provided. More detailed descriptions of the contributions of local agencies would strengthen the proposal.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Increased learning opportunities through the use of the literacy and science mobile services are a creative and innovative approach to</p>		

enhance student learning. The district demonstrates a commitment to reaching students beyond the school day and the school year through providing services to students where they live and outside the boundaries of the school building. The teachers of the mobile literacy and STEM projects will also work within the schools to develop lessons with teachers and promote collaboration. Developing collaborative relationships between the educators will provide a strong system of support for student growth. This is a comprehensive and creative plan based upon data analysis to determine appropriate personalized programs for students.

Partnerships with evening programs currently in place is a sound strategy for providing students with college and career ready experiences. The evening program will specifically target students identified as most at risk and provides a flexible schedule to support their needs.

It is not clear how students will be involved in monitoring their progress, identifying their goals, and creating their personalized learning environment.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A system is described to connect teachers with academic coaching; professional development, and data based systems to promote assessment analysis. Targeted professional development activities are described that are justified by a connection to student data and students identified needs. Digital resources are described to support students and staff.

The amount of hours of professional development is unclear to determine if the training will be sufficient to support the endeavors of the proposal. The PLC opportunities appear to be held once a month, which is insufficient to support the challenging goals of the project. Small group collaboration is described but the proposal is vague in identifying the frequency of the collaborative meetings. The role of academic leaders (principals) in ongoing professional development is not well described. It is unclear if professional learning communities or collaborative meetings among staff are a regular and consistent approach to address training, student data review, continuous improvement for students and staff, or discuss and select appropriate tools to meet student needs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents a reasonable plan for connecting the program's director with curriculum coaches to identify and target schools and sub groups most in need of support. It is also reasonable to involve the school sites in hiring the staff that will deliver the training and support to the teachers of those students identified as most in need of services. There is strong evidence that data will be analyzed to determine sites and subgroups in need, providing a specific base for support. Rationales are provided for addressing literacy and math gaps, increasing college readiness, and drop out rates through personalized learning environments ranging from mobile units to evening school settings. School advisory groups working with the district and school leadership strengthens the communication between all stakeholders. The proposal states that online assessment tools are being developed to track and analyze student data. Credit recovery to increase graduation rates and target college readiness will be addressed through a credible strategy of evening opportunities. The schools within the district appear to have appropriate autonomy to develop calendars and schedules in their examples of bi-weekly teacher meetings and opportunities for professional development.

The proposal states that staff working in struggling schools will be required to participate in bi-weekly meetings. More specification in describing the process for supporting all sites while targeting the most struggling sites is needed. It is not clear whether or not all staff or the staff in the most struggling sites will receive the targeted support and collaborative time and opportunity. The technology plan for coaches to deliver curriculum suggestions for all staff is not specific to the topics that may be required to develop a high quality plan. Preschool students needs and strategies to address their needs are not presented.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The current system in place (IIS) provides substantial access to data for school staff and parents. The IIS system is stated as an available system for parents to access data, for students to access data, collaborate with other students, access activities and store work. A system is

described to obtain parent feedback through paper surveys, which is a reasonable strategy in working with parents who may not have access to technology. Another strategy strengthened by use of the IIS program is the ability of parents to monitor student work and to ask questions of the program staff. Further, the proposal describes appropriate family night events in order to provide more opportunities to inform and involve parents and families who may or may not have the access to the necessary technology. District technology staff currently in place with the addition of technology support to be hired through the grant activities strengthens the viability of supporting the use of technology as a system to provide increased transparency.

A few examples of parent/family night activities are presented. The proposal is vague on frequency, structure, and topics of the parent nights. The system for collecting and analyzing the paper versions of parent feedback is not well described.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district currently has a sound system in place to review programs on a regular basis to provide evidence of need to revise or maintain project goals and services. The performance measures are reasonable. Goals are based upon previous growth in sub groups, which is a reasonable expectation for students. The district provides reasonable evidence that it will revise goals and program strategies when an analysis of data is completed in November. The district employs a three-tiered model for continuous improvement to connect the strategic plan to the school plans to the classroom and individual effectiveness. A Plan, Do, Study, Act process is described for ongoing review of all projects and improvement efforts. Benchmarking and formative assessments are in place for classroom monitoring of student progress to use as a basis of discussion in collaborative meetings. District teams will visit the schools to monitor fidelity of implementation of the project. At the district level surveys will be developed to obtain feedback from the various stakeholders. All of these efforts will be combined to provide the project staff with informative data for revision and improvements.

The collaboration of teachers to analyze data and share strategies is not well described in terms of frequency and protocols of meetings. The performance measure targets are based upon growth made in the baseline year 2011-2012. Using prior student growth is a reasonable expectation but it is not demonstrative of higher expectations for students during the implementation of the project services.

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

The proposal documents a variety of sound strategies for communicating with the stakeholders via newsletters, phone calls, open house and parent nights, and a variety of strategies for analyzing and presenting data to the stakeholders in appropriate settings. From the state level to the classroom level the ‘plan, do, study, act’ process is described as a strategy for communication and revision. A three -tiered model of communication and organization provides for district staff communication. The director of the project will meet with representative stakeholders to conduct individual interviews to assess needs, monitor the effectiveness of the project, identify strengths and weaknesses within the project, and review the benefits to the community.

The details of what the parent nights might look like are vague. A thorough description is not presented that includes agendas and activities of parent nights to support access to information and provide feedback for revisions to goals. Collaborative meetings among staff in each school are not defined in terms of specific schedules, incentives to attend, and whether or not early release time is used to create the opportunity. The proposal suggests a messenger system to inform the public via telephone but the specifics of how and when the messenger is used are not included to indicate that program updates are provided. The proposal does not include information regarding the method of providing staff with walk through data or indicate how this data is specifically used to inform instruction. Although a variety of methods of communicating with parents and other stakeholders are noted, it is not clear how or when their feedback will be used to revise and adjust program goals and services.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Detailed and reasonable growth targets are presented in the proposal for students as a whole and for sub groups of students that are based upon the available data and previous growth in sub groups and grade levels for annual baseline data. Pre-K targets are included. The

applicant provides the rationale for selection of the growth targets by describing the growth value model (EVAAS) from the North Carolina Ready Initiative. Appropriate assessments are noted for various grade levels such as the analysis of end of course assessments in grades 3 - 12. The use of end of course assessments provides support to the data analyzed from annual state assessments. The performance measures are ambitious and achievable for all subgroups. Physical fitness is tracked in the district through a Council of Childhood Obesity support.

Pre-K targets and performance measures are not well described. The pre-K students are included in a performance target for K-3 students. The proposal lacks evidence that preschool students needs will be addressed. A vague reference is included in the vision section of the proposal to address preschool learning needs. A benchmarking data system is not described. The evaluation of staff and a performance measure for staff progress is not noted.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents clear evidence throughout that data will be reviewed and goals will be revised on a regular basis throughout the project implementation period. A continuous review process is described through reasonable support of the project staff, stakeholder feedback, teacher collaboration, and an ongoing process for project review that exists currently within the district. Data review is included as a logical strategy for review and revision of program goals and performance measures. Professional development is included as well as several activities that include technology in a variety of ways: student access to technology, parent access to technology, staff access to technology, and district level access to the technology to review and revise the services.

The proposal does not include section E4. The technology systems may not be well supported by the number of technology staff identified. The system does not include an adequate timeline for review of data nor information that indicates that students will have access to monitor their own growth and work with staff to revise personalization of their academic experience.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget presented is justified to support the proposed activities of the project. One-time purchases are explained and include the purchase of the mobile units. Costs are included to adequately support the mobile literacy and STEM projects with drivers, materials, and other staffing. Transportation costs for students to attend the evening school settings are included.

Personnel costs do not appear to be sufficient to attract high quality staffing for the project. Full time/part time staffing is not clearly presented in order to determine if staffing costs are sufficient. The professional development is not described to support travel costs of teachers to attend training or activities outside of the LEA.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project presents adequate information that data will be analyzed in order to determine effectiveness of strategies to inform revisions in services to project participants following the term of the grant period. The district lists numerous collaborative relationships with community groups and agencies from which they receive support in numerous ways. The project intends to seek additional funds to sustain the services from these partners as well as from additional federal funds for professional development. Key goals, timelines, and deliverables are supported by the budget presented.

A train the trainer model is presented as evidence the project goals will be sustained through staff development however, the professional development activities are not well described. It is unclear if the budget presented is adequate to support ongoing and sustained staff training with time provided for collaboration and review.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Evidence is presented that documents the collaboration of local community agencies and businesses for the project. The letters of support include support of a Smart Start program that adds evidence to the project's inclusion of Pre-K students. Goals and desired results are well described for most of the participants to be served. A comprehensive process is in place to provide the community with access to program information through the media, radio, and district web site. A process is also described that is adequate to support the district's effort to collect information and feedback from the stakeholders, reviews the data, and revise the program goals as needed.

The project does not include substantial evidence of the level of service to preschool students who will be involved in the program. A comprehensive plan to support sustained staff development is not clear in such a way that capacity would be built and maintained. Details are lacking providing teachers and leaders with time to collaboratively review data and revise services from the administrative levels of the program services to the students in the classroom.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The district's proposal meets this priority through describing expanded opportunities for students. Personalized learning environments are innovatively targeted through mobile literacy and STEM labs. College and career ready opportunities are addressed through a credit recovery program in the evening school setting, which is an appropriate strategy to serve these students and their targeted needs. Curriculum coaches are included in the project to provide support to teachers using data to determine topics and needs. The district describes a well-developed collaborative relationship with local businesses, resource agencies, and other educational entities. There is strong support from the community to validate the commitment to the project.

Total	210	140
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0077NC-2 for Stanly County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Stanly County Schools (SCS) sets four strategic areas for this grant proposal, including (1) Personalizing the Literacy Environment; (2)

Personalizing the STEM Environment; (3) Providing a flexible Comprehensive Evening Program for High Needs Students; and (4) Providing High Quality Professional Development. SCS proposes to meet college and career ready standards through the development of the Personalized Environments and the Comprehensive Evening Program (CEP). These programs propose to meet students beyond the usually experienced classroom to extend learning opportunities beyond the normal school day or setting, in ways that are still aligned with college and career ready standards, and that capitalize on student interests.

SCS describes a robust, pre-existing data system that has been funding through the state RttT grant. SCS also proposes to utilize EVAAS, an value-added technology system that provides precise measurements of student progress over time. SCS describes a plan that uses existing data systems to justify instructional decisions made for the Personalized Literacy and STEM Environments, and for the CEP. SCS will also use data to drive decisions around professional development.

SCS describes a professional development program that partners with a local university (UNC-Charlotte), but also draws upon educator effectiveness data to create effective teachers. SCS plans to staff the Personalized Environments and the CEP with the most effective teachers.

SCS will use a data review, including subgroup data, to enhance the learning environment across all schools. The proposal describes a Literacy Environment at the elementary schools, and a STEM Environment that targets the middle and high schools. The CEP will provide high needs students with wrap-around support systems for effectiveness. Student data and technology continue to be cited as vehicles required to achieve success across initiatives.

The proposal describes personalized learning environments that are based in inquiry for the STEM content areas. SCS describes "today's laboratory," including details of what a visitor might see. The proposal also describes a Literacy Environment that will reach out to students in their neighborhoods, beyond the normal school day or year, or inspiring an intrinsic love for reading through author visits.

The proposal details the CEP environment by describing a relaxed, smaller learning environment that includes collaboration and student-teacher discussions.

SCS includes all schools in this proposal, aiming to turn around achievement in all locations. Because the proposal is convincing in its aims, and specific in its strategies, it is able to effect positive change. The creation of the CEP, which will target the at-high-risk population and increase graduation rates, is focused and feasible, and it is reasonable to believe will accomplish its goal. The Literacy and STEM Mobiles will reach out in innovative ways, and present unique opportunities to inspire students to learn. The Literacy Mobile, in particular, provides a way to combat the regression in reading that may be experienced over the summer months. Because it is only targeted at the elementary schools, it will not add any benefit to the students at the middle and high school levels, who may be struggling readers or writers.

The plan for high quality professional development based on data analysis training is reasonable, and soundly linked to the rest of the proposal. It is somewhat insufficient in its details in that it does not articulate a system of accountability for the data cycle. It does not present a plan for when and how teachers will analyze data, and how they will incorporate student performance results into teaching or re-teaching plans. The proposal does not clearly articulate if re-assessments will be monitored to indicate rises in teachers' proficiency when using data to drive instruction.

The proposal relies heavily on the identification and placement of effective educators in key positions. The plan does not sufficiently present a proposal for how it will attract and retain these qualified and effective candidates to these positions. Because this element is lacking, and because it is a necessary element for successful implementation, this omission could negatively affect the implementation of key initiatives.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
Stanly County (SCS) describes an organization in which all schools are eligible to participate, and it therefore justifies the inclusion of all schools in the proposal. When selecting schools, SCS determined that over 56% of students are eligible for the free/reduced lunch program. The process for identifying and selecting schools is valid and appropriate, as these schools all meet the eligibility criteria and SCS aims to implement reform across the district. The School Demographics Data chart is comprehensive in its list of participating schools, the number of participating educators, the number of participating high-needs students, the number of participating low-income students, school and LEA totals, and the percent of participating students from low-income families. 8680 students will participate in the program. 4765 participating students are identified as high need and from low-income families. The proposal identifies the need for high quality educators in various positions, and discusses the qualifications of successful candidates for these appointments. The proposal does not identify how it will attract and retain these candidates, however. Because this plan relies heavily on appropriately staffing positions with highly effective candidates, the lack of a comprehensive plan to do so could impede the progress of any of the projects.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

To describe LEA-wide reform and change, Stanly County (SCS) identifies two reform themes: college/career readiness and engaging students. To describe the college/career readiness theme, SCS cites evidence that its student population is not prepared for post-secondary success, including a census report that less than 12% of the population has obtained a Bachelor degree or higher. It describes how it will measure success in the college/career theme, pointing to an increase in the number of college enrollees as well as scores on the ACT. To describe the student engagement theme, SCS cites recent research highlighting the power of educational technology. SCS does not describe how it will adequately measure success in a way that relates to educational technology.

SCS proposes to include all schools in the grant project. SCS intends for this project to act as a demonstration site for other rural districts. SCS proposes to reach out beyond the district once each semester, specifically through the STEM and Literacy Mobiles.

SCS presents a detailed Key Personnel and Strategies to Move Reform Beyond Stanly County Schools chart. While the chart includes relevant activities for implementation, it does not indicate associated timelines for completion of the activities.

In a section it titles Theory of Change, SCS presents a plan for hiring teachers for the CEP and the Personalizing Literacy and STEM Environments that focus on attracting and retaining the "best of our best" to these positions. SCS will use educator effectiveness evaluation ratings and a criteria rubric to identify these teachers. This process ensures that the highest quality educators may be selected, but it does not indicate whether there will also be a process based on incentives or other activities to attract these high quality candidates, or if the candidates will be individually approached for selection. The success of the plan depends highly on the personnel involved. SCS is inadequate in its description of how the required personnel will come to the newly created positions.

SCS describes High Quality Professional Development that ties PD plans to gaps in learning, connecting educator evaluation to student data. The professional development plan is consistent in its goal to rely on data-driven instruction. It is insufficient in its plan to establish a system of accountability and monitoring for the implementation of the data-driven instruction model.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The **first Stanly County (SCS) chart** includes ambitious, achievable objectives designed to increase student performance on summative assessments, decrease the achievement gap, increase graduation rates, and increase college enrollment rates. A **second chart** describes the specific ways the four project strategies address achievement gaps, college readiness, and personalized learning environments. This chart presents additional, detailed information describing how the strategies will address the core strategic areas identified in the first chart. The **final set of charts** establish a baseline and annual targets for improvement related to student performance in the aggregate and for subgroups, closing the achievement gap, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.

(a) Stanly County presents a chart detailing LEA-Wide Goals for Improved Student Outcomes, including objectives, activities, and a timeline. The first goal, aligned with the core strategic area of College and Career Ready Standards, is to "Provide new avenues of personalized learning aligned to the Common Core standards to increase student engagement and improve achievement." SCS identifies 3% increased proficiency over the life of the project as a realistic, attainable target. The chart identifies specific student performance objectives, unique and linked activities proposed to reach these objectives, and a timeline for attainment. The literacy and STEM initiatives, the CEP program, and targeted professional development based on data could realistically produce a 3% increase in proficiency rates over the life of the project.

The chart includes 3 additional goals, and mirrors the same structure, including specific objectives, detailed activities, and targeted timelines. The remaining goals reflect the remaining core strategic areas: Data Systems, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turn Around Low-Performing Schools. Under Data Systems, SCS identifies 100% teacher participation in planning district professional development focused on data analysis as attainable. This goal is attainable if participation is mandated. As noted in other section comments, however, this plan also requires a system of accountability. The plan will only add to the positive effects of the overall plan if teachers are held accountable to data-driven planning and associated student assessment.

Under Great Teachers and Leaders, SCS identifies the provision of ongoing professional development in motivating and utilizing creative and innovative practices to reach struggling students as a goal, and creates objectives that include 100% of teachers reporting increased confidence in personalizing student instruction for Literacy and STEM. Many of the timelines indicate "ongoing" as a target. This target is ambiguous in that it does not require a specific schedule for professional intervention and development. It does not establish accountability for lesson or unit plans that draw on the Literacy and STEM professional development as provided in the plan.

The annual proposed increases on end of grade (3-8 Reading) and end of course (High School English 1) in the last set of charts seem appropriate, but the state ESEA targets are not identified, and therefore there is no point of comparison.

(b) In the first chart, SCS proposes to increase K-5 literacy proficiency and 6-12 STEM proficiency by 5% for subgroups over the life of the project, as measured by EVAAS data. The activities do not appear to target the achievement gap specifically, as they are proposed to apply to all students in all schools. The 5% proficiency goals for subgroups appears inconsistent with the 3% (increase in proficiency) overall goal. Because the low-income/high needs subgroup is greater than 50%, a 5% increased proficiency goal for subgroups makes the 3% overall increase in proficiency goal irrelevant.

The second chart details the activities, timeline, and responsible parties associated with the Literacy and STEM initiatives. The plan is ambitious yet achievable, but would be stronger if it included a system of accountability to measure the classroom teachers inclusion of lessons and assessments based on the associated intervention and professional development.

The achievement gap measurements in the final set of charts do not indicate if the percentage is measuring percent proficient, or a different indicator is used. Also, as the state levels are not clearly shown, there is no point of comparison.

(c) In the first chart, SCS identifies a percentage objective (85%) of high needs students who will meet graduation requirements (coursework) within four years. It goes on to link activities to this objective, including the creation of a flexible evening program, the use of online credit recovery systems, the incorporation of wrap-around services and interventions that create a personalized learning environment, access to career counseling services, and the implementation of an online career exploration service, as well as other specific activities. Each activity is associated with a specific timeline. The CEP program and details represent a strength of this plan and proposal.

The second chart provides comprehensive details designed to increase the graduation rate by training educators to work with a specific, high-risk population, establishing a realistic pathway to coursework and credit recovery, and presenting community partnerships to support the work.

The graduation rate increase in the final set of charts is clear and appropriate, but does not include a statewide comparison.

(d) The Career Development Coordinator (CDC) is apparently designed to provide support for students who enter the workforce, rather than choose college after graduation. The plan does provide for the continuation of the Focused Academy sites at each of the four high schools, which provide targeted career and college courses. The exposure to college courses, as well as early enrollment could lead to increased college enrollment rates for high school graduates who gain exposure and experience at that level.

The college enrollment rate increase in the final set of charts is clear and appropriate, but does not include a statewide comparison.

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	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Stanly County has engaged in district curriculum mapping to implement the Common Core State Standards. SCS has provided every classroom with a computer and projector. All schools have been equipped with wireless Internet access. SCS has participated in the state RttT grant and the NC State Improvement Project.

In 2008, several of the SCS schools were in school improvement status for reading. The schools exited improvement in 2011 due to growth in reading proficiency, as evidenced in summative proficiency scores. In 2007 - 2008, 3rd grade reading scores were at 51.5% proficiency, and three years later, 3rd grade scores increased almost 20 points to 71% proficiency. 4th grade scores were raised 15 points, and 5th grade points were raised 17 points. This data documents convincing increases in proficiency across grades 3, 4 and 5 in reading. It is unclear from the narrative whether this increase was located in the aforementioned schools identified for improvement, or across all schools.

At the high school level, reading proficiency for the Students with Disabilities subgroup increased from 15.4% in 2010-2011 to 44.2% in 2011-2012.

The SCS Limited English Proficiency subgroup met all three Annual Measurable Achievement Objective goals for 2011-2012, after failing to meet goals the year before.

Between 2010 - 2011 and 2011 - 2012, SCS narrowed the achievement gap for the White and Asian subgroups (23.6% gap to 21.2% gap) and for the White and Black subgroups (29.2% gap to 17.8% gap).

The high school graduation rate increased 1.1% from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, but remains .2% below the state rate.

The achievement data does demonstrate improvement in the specific areas specified in the previous comments. The achievement data presented was insufficient to fully analyze progress over the previous four years. Much of the improvement data presented is concentrated over the past two academic years. It does not present improved outcomes in the area of college enrollment.

(b) The proposal presents four schools as evidence of ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools, but

21 schools will participate in this grant. The proposal cites one year as evidence of high math growth and one year as evidence of high reading growth for one elementary. It cites an increase over two years of 11% reading growth in another elementary. These pieces of evidence were insufficient to describe demonstrated evidence of ambitious and significant reforms. When describing reform in one middle school, the proposal lacks sufficient evidence as it points to stagnant math scores and a decline in reading scores. The most significant reform presented may be at the high school level, where graduation rates rose from 69.4% to 83.0%, following the implementation of The Freshman Academy.

(c) SCS provides information regarding student progress via the district website links to NC Report Cards. The system uses Parent Portal to offer parents online, real-time access to student grades, discipline reports, and attendance information. Teachers access records and demographics information through NCWISE. The district uses the state online evaluation system (True North Logic) for the evaluation of staff. This information is reviewed quarterly. Evaluation information guides improvement plans and professional development plans. This plan is restrictive in that it does not provide for parents who may not have access to technology or sufficient skills to navigate the online system to access data.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

SCS does provide a high level of transparency in the dissemination of processes, practices and investments. The public may request all salary and expenditure information, including school level data, through notification to the Superintendent. The details of making a request, and the timeline and process for providing the information requested are not included in the proposal. Salary information is also provided in several public school reports. School Board meetings are public, and may include new hire information, including salaries.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes information irrelevant to this section, although potentially relevant to a later section of the grant. The information regarding school board support, community support, executive support, district support and school support does not adequately address evidence of State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. The information regarding State supports is insufficient in its omission of these same conditions.

The proposal details the Ready Initiative. The Ready Initiative is the result of the state's reception of an ESEA Waiver in May 2012. The proposal states that the initiative will give districts the flexibility to embark on one of the largest educational reforms in history. It provides students and educators with new school accountability, educator rating, and curriculum standards. Supporting details regarding potential autonomy are vague. The proposal states that utilizing ratings will assure the placement of highly effective educators and administrators with high needs students, but it does not indicate with sufficient details how Stanly County is to achieve these placement goals. There is no evidence that the state will support creative attraction and retention policies for staff, for example.

The proposal states that NCDPI has offered guidance in pursuing this grant. This guidance has come in the form of webinars, workshops, links to resources, and a letter of recommendation. It is reasonable to assume that the state supports this application and will continue to provide SCS with the conditions and autonomy required to be successful.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Stanly County (SCS) describes a variety of survey processes, including electronic, paper, and open discussion forums used to gain feedback and guide the grant proposal. SCS educators took part in an online survey yielding a 70% response rate. The educator feedback was the same as that received from administrators, and guides the four focus areas of this grant. It is not clear if this 70% response rate to the survey is indicative of evidence that 70% of teachers from participating schools support this proposal.

A Parent Advisory Group participated in a paper survey, and the most common responses included literacy and STEM education, which are two of the four focus areas of this grant. The response rate for the PAG survey is not included in this section. A PAG letter of support is not noted in this section.

SCS has provided 19 letters of support from county and local governments (towns), business organizations, early learning programs, church/community groups, institutes of higher education, community organizations, and businesses. Educators and parents are included on the RttD planning committee. These letters document clear support from a variety of organizations and institutions for the grant proposal. The letters are not detailed in the exact descriptions of support, but a variety of community organizations and business partners are unequivocal in their pledges of support and encouragement. There is no student on the planning committee, and student support is not referenced.

The lack of strong evidence related to parent and student support and engagement makes a comprehensive judgment related to the success

of the plan difficult to make with strong certainty. The success of the Comprehensive Evening Program, a particularly strong component of the plan, would be better supported through the professed support of potential students.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal's plan for education reform targets four areas: Personalized Literacy Environment, Personalized STEM Environment, Comprehensive Evening Program, and High Quality Professional Development. These areas continue to be presented throughout the grant, and explained in detail in multiple sections.

a.i./a.ii. The Comprehensive Evening Program purports to offer individualized instruction, to spark students interest in career subjects, and to offer multiple pathways to a timely graduation. The CEP will include regular goal setting conferences with the guidance counselor and teacher. The devotion of time to student goal-setting and monitoring will increase the likelihood that potential college and career ready students will see goals as critical to college and career objectives. Linking these goals to learning in this alternative environment will enable these students to draw direct connections between the knowledge and skills gained at the school, and the goals that are set.

a.ii. Several initiatives present reasonable opportunities for educators to track students' academic activity and progress. It is clear that data will be accessed to use in parent conferences and to guide and inform student goals. Student's access to the Literacy Mobile will be measured via a check-out log, and end-of-year assessments will be compared to back-to-school assessments to determine percentage of growth from summer reading. Academic school year student data will provide the foundation for parent and student conferences to track success and milestones for student goals. Reading software will provide subgroups with below grade level literacy skills opportunities to receive personalized educational intervention plans. Student performance data in the STEM areas will provide feedback regarding student progress and indicators of preparedness for college and future careers. It is unclear if students below the high school level will be involved in goal-setting, or the measurement of progress related to academic goals.

a.iii. The Literacy and STEM Mobile focus on providing students engaging lessons and capitalizing on student interest. The STEM Mobile, in particular, is innovative in its plan to allow students to explore STEM-related possibilities through hands-on experiments and technological research. The uniqueness of the Mobile structure, especially if staffed with highly effective educators as the plan proposes, has the ability to make a significant, motivational impact on student interest and learning. As the proposal indicates, appropriate staffing is a key to successful implementation and impact.

a.iv. The plan does not provide evidence related to diverse cultures, contents and perspectives.

a.v. The plan proposes several ways that can be expected to reasonably provide students with opportunities for creativity, collaboration and goal setting. The Literacy Mobile teacher will work with the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Teacher to engage strong readers and develop more advanced reading skills. The STEM Mobile describes a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and collaborative learning. The collaboration referenced pertains to work between the STEM Mobile teacher and the classroom teachers. This includes a rotation of science bins, use of an online discussion platform, and references to professional development. Collaboration and teamwork among all students is specifically referenced in certain areas. There is reference to cooperative learning and a buddy system among targeted subgroups. There is also reference to the potential for collaboration among students facilitated by the use of iPads. References are not particularly widespread among all students, however. The goal-setting initiative described for the CEP is the most tangible evidence of the potential impact of student goal-setting to drive achievement. It is unclear if the students below that high school grade level, or if high school students educated in traditional secondary settings will partake in goal-setting activities. The Mobile environments do provide reasonable assurance of increased creativity and higher order thinking skills through their unique and non-traditional approaches, and through the novelty of specific, high-quality instructional partnerships beyond the usual classroom teacher and setting.

b.i. The goal and description of the CEP is well aligned to this requirement, providing frequent and targeting monitoring and goal-setting between faculty and students. The CEP will also access programs such as Gradpoint, which offer a personalized, web-based curriculum appropriate to individualized instruction levels. The Literacy Mobile describes individualized book selections and an online reading blog to track individual successes and milestones. The personalization of the STEM initiative is less clear than either the CEP or the Literacy Mobile.

b.ii. The proposal does provide sufficient, convincing evidence of high quality instructional approaches and environments. It describes in detail the uniqueness of the Literacy and STEM Mobiles, and supports the innovations with specific plans for implementation. It also presents reasonable justification for the CEP, and offers the ambitious yet achievable objectives for its success. The plan recognizes that the success of these initiatives is clearly dependent on appropriate staffing. The plan includes a process for identifying appropriate staff for positions, but does not include details of how it will attract and retain the "best of the best" to these positions.

b.iii. The Literacy Mobile and STEM Mobile will provide students with high quality curricular and learning materials based on appropriate content standards. The teachers will access student performance throughout the year to choose materials appropriate to the personalized learning structures, based on student assessment results. The STEM program, in particular, through its focus on technology and scientific materials promotes access to digital content and high quality materials.

b.iv. Ongoing and regular feedback is a strength of the proposal. At the CEP, routine meetings between students and faculty (including teachers and counselors) are specified and supported. These prescribed meetings provide sufficient oversight and will keep students on track towards reaching goals. The incorporation of online learning platforms also facilitates oversight and monitoring of student progress. The utilization of EVAAS, benchmark, EOY and EOG assessments also contributes to successful oversight and monitoring. Book groups, reading software (Successmaker), and student surveys of interest also assist in the personalization of instruction and content. Evidence that assessments throughout the year guide instructional decisions across all grade levels and content areas is lacking.

b.v. The CEP is designed to serve high-needs students at-risk for not completing graduation requirements on time. The innovative approach to structuring the delivery of instruction, via a non-traditional school and schedule, is convincing in its proposed ability raise the graduation rate. The incorporation of software to target students who struggle provide for adequate monitoring of progress. The proposal also targets subgroups by describing strategies that might be particularly useful to certain groups, such as cooperative learning or the buddy system. The proposal offers insufficient details of these strategies, and the ability for these strategies to target these groups is unclear.

c. The plan does create and staff a number of positions to train, assist and support students directly. As mentioned in the proposal and in reviewer comments, the attraction and retention of high quality personnel to these positions is a key to the program's success. That plan lacks completion in its omission of a proposal to attract and retain effective educators. There is a process to identify potential staff members, but none in place to attract and retain them. These staff members include, appropriately, teachers and counselors at the CEP, as well as Literacy Mobile and STEM Mobile teachers.

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

a.i. Reform happens at the school level, where initiatives are implemented. Principals drive that reform by developing teachers, or assuring they receive adequate training and professional development aligned with goals, and by holding teachers accountable to implementing the activities designed to drive reform. Stanly County (SCS) says it will renew its focus on principals as instructional leaders by sending them to professional development on interpreting data, targeting at risk students, and using data to plan individualized instruction. Principals will also receive training on effectively evaluating teachers. This training will assure that principals are prepared to oversee the specific activities and initiatives associated with this plan, and to evaluate the teachers' successful implementation of the activities. The proposal states that professional development for educators will focus on improving instruction, and gearing instruction towards college and career readiness. It describes partnerships with local universities. These partnerships allow teachers to focus instruction on skills necessary for success in college. If these partnerships continue, they will continue to be helpful in keeping instructional techniques and focus current to the changing demands of the college and work environments. The use of the Information Technology Specialists to share strategies related to using technology to personalize instruction does not provide sufficient details as to how the IT specialists will accomplish their goals.

a.ii. Teachers will participate in professional development to learn to effectively implement the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This training will focus on multiple means (modalities) for teaching, learning, and demonstrating knowledge. Curriculum Coaches will sustain the professional development through coaching and modeling. As the proposal notes, the district will have to offer resources to support these efforts. Although these resources may include the Literacy and STEM Mobiles, that link is not explicit in this section. The sustained PD, through coaching, is an effective way to assure on target implementation. This coaching will only be as strong as the Curriculum Coaches who provide it. A plan to attract these coaches is not readily available in this proposal. The district has planned for a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to gain a better understanding of how the learning style of today's students have been transformed due to our technology-driven world. There are no details as to the configuration or composition of this PLC, or its meeting schedule or any benchmark work product goals.

a.iii. SCS will access EVAAS to gain historical data, and state created assessments to help administrators identify the most effective teachers. Evidence of the use of interim formative assessments is sparse, and the means for the measurement of progress throughout the year, and not year to year, is unclear.

a.iv. Administrators will use data generated through the EVAAS system to identify effective educators. Teachers and principals are evaluated using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). The system details a process for evaluation, review, and improving planning, but the consequences of poor reviews or failure to meet plan requirements are not sufficiently detailed here.

b.i. Teachers will receive professional development, such as UDL, to meet the diverse needs of students. Some, although the number and process is not clear, will also participate in a PLC to understand today's learning styles. Student data will be accessed on an ongoing basis, and a student interest survey was referenced in another section of this proposal. The process provides opportunities through

educator evaluation and curriculum coaching for the incorporation of optimal learning approaches will be monitored.

b.ii. SCS will benefit from North Carolina's adoption of the CCSS, including the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards. The district previously launched a curriculum mapping project using Google Apps for Education. The app has allowed teachers and administrators to plan and collaborate to share best practices for delivering instruction based on the standards. The narrative indicates all teachers have been engaged, but there is no data to demonstrate that all teachers are engaged in meaningful ways, or that their actual lesson plans include information on best practices shared through the app. The district accesses and uses instructional technology, but the proposal states that the IT specialists will work with the Literacy and STEM Mobile teachers (these two latter teachers are integral to overall program success) to ensure the most effective use of additional technology acquired with grant funds. The proposal does not specify how that task is to be accomplished, nor a system for its accountability.

b.iii. SCS has presented a range of tools and programs intended to assist in the personalization of the learning environments. At the CEP, students will work with faculty to create individual goals. There is no evidence that individual, comprehensive plans for the middle and elementary students will be created the same way. Although a variety of methodologies and a range of tools and materials will be available, and data linked to student progress will be accessed, a clear plan for aligning the two on an individual, personalized basis is unclear.

c.i. The use of EVAAS data and the NCEES will allow school leadership teams to identify effective educators, outline areas for growth, provide constructive feedback, and engage in critical conversations after findings have been issued. The proposal is limited in that it does not prescribe a course of action to be taken for educators that earn less than satisfactory ratings.

c.ii. The proposal includes a chart of Proposed Professional Development, which indicates goals, the professional development activity, the teachers involved in the professional development, the timeline and mode of delivery of the activity, and the responsible parties. The chart is incomplete in that it does not clearly identify quantifiable, objective metrics to gage the effectiveness of the proposed professional development activities.

d. The proposal includes a detailed process for identifying high quality, effective teachers for placement. It does not sufficiently detail how SCS will attract those professionals to these positions, nor how it intends to keep them there once placed.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
a. The project will hire two new central office staff members dedicated to its success: The RttT-D Director and the Career Coordinator. The qualifications desired and the scope of their responsibilities are presented here, and detailed throughout the proposal. The level of support and intervention these two positions provide is appropriate, although the degree of autonomy and control that is necessary to effect reform is unclear. The direct line of command and report, or the provision of an organizational chart indicating supervisory responsibilities is not provided here.		
b. The proposal states that school leadership teams will maintain autonomy, but work with the RttT-D Director to monitor its activities. There is no mechanism to ensure accountability within the scope of autonomy and flexibility, however. In the event of a disagreement regarding activities or next steps, there does not appear to be a process for resolving disputes. Without that mechanism, it is unclear whether the scope of the leadership team's autonomy is clear and valid.		
c. and d. The proposal cites the STEM and Literacy initiatives as able to provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate subject mastery. It has been noted in other areas of the proposal that student performance data such as that generated through these initiatives will lead to greater levels of personalization of instruction. The only performance data noted specifically, however, is that produced through EVAAS or through other state assessments. It is unclear if these demonstrations of mastery discussed here will further drive individualized instruction. Without alternative measures to demonstrate mastery, the full scope of individualization is impacted negatively. The Comprehensive Evening Program, in its clear, innovative design does support this criteria fully. The CEP values the on task time in the program over a traditional schedule or setting.		
e. The proposal adequately specifies how and how often it will reach high needs learners (including use of translators, provisions for physical accessibility, etc.). It is inadequate in its explanation of how the programs will adapt high quality instructional practices for these learners in ways that maintain high expectations and best practice methodologies, but also allow all students to access the information presented in meaningful ways.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- a. This section includes a provision for paper-based surveys, in addition to electronic surveys, to solicit input and participation from all parents, not only the parents with access to online resources. The paper surveys will also be available in various translations for the English Language Learner populations. The major project areas will be nondiscriminatory in the scope of their reach. The Literacy Mobile, in fact, will focus its visits to the underprivileged areas of the district. Because all schools in the district are participating, all educators and students are taking part in grant initiatives. The benefits of the program are extended to all schools. All schools' accountability data will be accessed to determine the success of the initiatives. This plan is sufficient and high quality in its efforts to reach all students and parents.
- b. Technology and technical support is available through the mobile initiatives. Parent access to data and information through online portals is encouraged and supported. The proposal includes several evening events designed to assist parents with technology access problems or issues. The proposal does not sufficiently provide for a non-technology based resource to access similar data. It does not clearly provide a location or contact person for parents who require the district to do the work of accessing and presenting the data.
- c. and d. The NCDPI Instructional Improvement System (IIS) provides extensive support to parents and stakeholders who are able to access the system. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators will access and utilize the IIS. The district will provide the professional development necessary for its use. It is unclear precisely how this professional development will fit in with the other professional development referenced throughout this proposal. The IIS system does not appear to include budget data. It is also unclear as to which group of stakeholders is able to access with data set. For example, administrators are able to access human resource data in the form of performance and evaluation reports, but it is unclear if parents are able to access a subset of that same data. If all parents and stakeholders do not have the ability to access all pertinent data sets, the plan is incomplete. Because this plan is insufficient in that some stakeholders may not be able to access an online system, and others may not have the skills and knowledge to do so even with Internet accessibility, this plan is not complete in its scope.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Stanly County Schools (SCS) will use its existing three tier structure for continuous improvement, and adapt it to fit the RttT-D programs. Tier I is the district level. The district claims it will seek feedback from the NCDPI and the DOE, and use the feedback to improve programs. The provides a sound and reasonable plan for soliciting objective feedback and comments, and using that information to continuously improve programs and structures. The district also plans to use perception surveys as part of its self-assessment, but whether these surveys will drive change is unclear. The results of the survey, however, will be posted. As part of Tier 1 efforts, the district will also disseminate information to the public through local media and the website. The inclusion of the local media provides better assurance that stakeholders without Internet access will also receive information. Tier II is the school level. The school will receive oversight from the district central office. The RttT-D will control the evaluation of assessment and monitoring outcomes. Regular meetings are intended, although it is not clear if there will be a consequence to schools that are not successfully implementing or faithfully implementing the programs. Tier III is the classroom effort, and requires heavy monitoring from principals to teachers. But the consequence for poor evaluations or lack of compliance is not clear. Professional development is part of the proposal and the improvement plan, but these opportunities are only as good as the quality of the coaches and professional development providers. There is no process indicated for the attraction of high quality coaches, and no process indicated for the reservation of high quality professional development providers. The plan references a previously successful committee model for making improvement suggestions and recommendations, but does not immediately link that committee model to choosing high quality professional development providers.		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Stanly County (SCS) district leadership meets with advisory teams of stakeholders on a quarterly basis. To reach a larger audience, there are public hearings to inform the community of decisions that affect schools. The district also reaches a broad audience through the use of a mass-calling system. There is no process described for how the contact information used in mass-calls is obtained, nor how current the information is, but it can be assumed from references to school level information-sharing initiatives that the contact information is obtained at that level. The district claims that improvement plans are communicated down to the classroom level, but its process for doing this is limited. This section contains much information regarding school improvement plans and sharing information, but does indicate how the incorporation of this grant program will definitively become a standing agenda item or share point for the activities and processes referenced. The section also references improvement teams, advisories and interview, but does not include information on how the participants for these activities are chosen, and if membership includes a broad cross-section of stakeholders - especially any

historically underrepresented stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Stanly County (SCS) chose performance measures based on areas of need identified using EVAAS, ACCESS (ELL) testing, and end of grade testing in reading and math. The proposal does not indicate if a committee was responsible for isolating and analyzing the performance data, and for determining ambitious yet achievable growth targets. The baseline data is credible in that it is provided via the EVAAS system, and specifically identifies the percent of students deemed "on track to college and career readiness." The trajectory and final goals are ambitious yet achievable, however the process for reviewing interim benchmarks and improving the measure over time is undocumented.</p> <p>The documentation of the number or percentage of students who are taught by an effective teacher, or attend a school led by an effective principal is lacking. The proposal does not provide for a K - 3 non-cognitive growth indicator. There is no evidence grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicators of successful implementation of the plan at any level. Because the proposal lacks evidence for measuring performance in these areas, the final score for this criteria reflects the omissions.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A section specifically devoted to (E)(4) is not included in the applicant's response. In other sections of the proposal, there is detailed reference to oversight provided by key central office personnel. There are targets presented for student improvement. There are also targets for professional development activities. But there is no evidence of a clear plan to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities.</p>		
F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)		
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The budget worksheet presented is comprehensive in its rollout of a four year project plan, and the inclusion of total project expenditures by general accounting line item. These costs appear reasonable and efficient. The worksheet includes the amount of funding to be received from other non-RttT-District sources, by year and in total. The description of the non-RttT-D funds is not available in the budget worksheet. A review of the next section cites support from CTE federal funding, the state RttT award, local funds and Title II-A funds. It is unclear from the worksheet alone why travel costs increase slightly over the four year period. It is reasonable to assume that equipment costs drastically decrease, as most equipment can be presumed to be one-time purchase costs. In the next narrative, this is sufficiently explained to include the Literacy STEM Mobiles, and the reduction supports maintenance after year 1.</p> <p>The district proposes to utilize a train the trainer model for professional development to sustain its implementation. It will also cover ongoing professional development through Title II-A funds, which is appropriate.</p> <p>The additional project-level detail tables are sufficiently detailed, and project out over the length of the grant award.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district acknowledges that it requires the support of the grant to cover the initial and substantial costs associated with the program. It claims that the local transportation fund will cover the routine cost of maintenance going forward, beyond the term of the grant. The district anticipates support from the CTE funding to support the STEM initiative, which is reasonable. Other project expenditures exist as line items within the current operating budget, and are presumed to receive continued funding support.</p> <p>The district is counting on the RttT-D Director to cultivate relationships and partnerships that may lead to other grant monies, in order to continue to fund some project initiatives. As the proposal acknowledges these economically challenging times, this plan may not be fully realized.</p>		

There is no evidence of a plan to use data to evaluate the effectiveness of past investments, or a plan to inform future investments. Improvement and advisory committees are referenced elsewhere in the response, but not in relationship to budgetary decisions. The interoperability framework as detailed in another section of the proposal does not include reference to transparency related to the budget. Lastly, there is no three year projection.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) Stanly County (SCS) describes a number of partnerships formed to support its plan. Its existing partnership with Stanly Regional Hospital will be expanded to link STEM education with career opportunities, and to provide teacher professional development. This is evidence of a direct link between what students learn, what teachers teach, and what students are able to do with the knowledge they acquire in school. The partnership with Stanly County Library will provide support to the Literacy Mobile teacher in selecting high-interest materials for targeted subgroups. The partnership with Michelin Tires Corporation, which currently includes mentors, will be expanded to include Literacy and STEM tutors, in cooperation with the mobile programs. The professional development partnership with UNC-Charlotte, and an expanded partnership with Pfeiffer University will be focused to address the professional development needs relevant to the grant. The partnership with Stanly Community College will target the Comprehensive Evening Program population. To address the needs of ethnic subgroups, the proposal points to several organizations operating in surrounding areas. It is unclear whether this will be representative or effective, as needs vary greatly between small, rural areas and larger, affluent areas. The proposal details a first-year partnership with the LIFT program, targeting at risk students and providing opportunities for credit recovery. It is unclear exactly how this program will function in support of or simultaneously with the CEP program.

(2) The results listed are comprehensive and exhaustive in that they link an awareness of learning, learning, academic success, graduation, and college and career readiness across content areas and grade levels, and target both students and parents.

(3) (a) The link between the community partnerships and tracking the results listed and explained in (2) is unclear.

(b) The plan details access to student performance data elsewhere in the proposal, but here it appears to focus on social-emotional or health data. The proposal does not sufficiently explain the type of data it will collect, and the process for analyzing that data and then using it to target populations.

(c) This plan will include all schools in the LEA, and therefore scaling up is not necessary, although the proposal claims it will serve as a model to other rural districts.

(d) The proposal does not specifically detail how partnerships will improve results over time, but does discuss the expansion of current partnerships to support key initiatives.

4) The proposal does not address an immigrant population, but does detail plans to survey educators and families to determine needs within these subgroups and ideas about partnership possibilities. It is appropriate that the proposal recognizes the establishment of trust between SCS and families to lay a foundation for future program participation.

5) The proposal indicates that SCS will use a survey system to assess needs. It also plans to review needs with school nurses, social workers, and principals. This indicates an intent to provide wrap-around services to support student success.

It is unclear whether the response in this section fully addresses all criteria. The presentation of annual ambitious yet achievable performance results across the participating population, including subgroups, is clear. The proposal clearly establishes a baseline, benchmarks for improvement, and a post-grant target.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the Literacy and STEM Mobiles as part of Personalizing the Learning Environments, and the thorough explanation of the innovative Comprehensive Evening Program (CEP) are strong evidence that Stanly County (SCS) has met Absolute Priority 1. Through the Personalizing the (Literacy and Math) Learning Environments initiative, teachers are collaborating to use

data to drive instruction, while creating innovative and inspiring lesson plans that draw on student interests. The mobiles are able to travel, and there is specific reference that the Literacy Mobile will reach out to historically underperforming and underprivileged students in their neighborhoods over the summer months. The CEP will target students at risk of dropping out or not completing graduation requirements on time. It is the definition of personalization as it convincingly describes an alternate path to reaching graduation requirements, tailoring the educational requirements and commitments to fit the needs of these students. The proposal relies on staffing its innovative initiatives with the "best of the best." It presents a plan to identify these highly effective educators, although it lacks a comprehensive plan for recruiting them or attracting their interest to these assignments. The plan proposes ambitious yet achievable student performance targets for the aggregate and all subgroups. It also proposes a detailed plan for professional development, but not clearly articulate how the effectiveness of this development will be monitored and evaluated. SCS will benefit from NCDPI in several ways, according the adoption of the Common Core, the availability of EVAAS to look at data, and the development of the NCEES to evaluate effective educators.

Total

210

145



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0077NC-3 for Stanly County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates a unique and strong coherent reform vision that addresses critical needs within the North Carolina Race to the Top current educational reform movement by providing concentrated support for schools within Stanly County through the development and implementation of a Mobile learning opportunities. These learning opportunities allow for sharing of resources and highly qualified teachers and other professionals with a concentrated focus placed on personalized learning experiences for all students. Looking through the lens of personalization, the areas identified to support the reform movement are:

1. Literacy Mobile that travels to schools providing a personalized rich Literacy Environment through the use of motivational lessons incorporating digital technology, author visits, and motivating literature materials.
2. STEM Mobile that travels to schools providing highly engaging technology rich blended learning experiences (virtual and face-to-face).
3. Flexible Comprehensive Evening Program for High Needs Students where the community college is engaged and offers a supportive evening learning environment to help students set goals and accomplish those goals.
4. Partnership with a local university to provide High Quality Professional Development for teachers and school leaders.

The applicant clearly connects each of the reform areas stated with the current needs of the district to provide support in these areas and clearly identifies the extent to which this reform effort will support the four core educational assurance areas for the RTTT-D initiative. This plan is further supported by the current educational reform concentration and research response for literacy, STEM, and College and Career Readiness initiatives.

The applicant shares a plan for recruiting and retaining teachers through the use of ongoing professional development and the "First Three" program for Initially Licensed Teachers (ILT). To identify effective teachers students and subgroups data is analyzed.

The connections articulated in this proposed plan for using mobile access to share resources and professional expertise within the school district indicates great promise for efficient use of instructional materials that will allow for greater personalized learning environments to support student achievement and help this school district to continue moving in a positive direction. The Applicant scores in the high range for this criterion with 1 point deducted for failing to provide specific clarity regarding specific K-12 standards that will be used to help the students move towards the mastery of college and career ready standards.

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

The applicant states that all schools meet the criteria for this initiative and all schools within the Stanly County School District will be served by the project. All grade bands will be served as well from grades K-12. The applicant noted that 8,680 students will be participating, with 56% of those students are from low income families (over the 40% as required for eligibility) and little more than half of those are identified as high-need students.

The total number of educators are noted within the application for the school district and all educators in the schools were identified as participating. The selection process for determining the teachers to participate was not clearly described but based upon the narrative provided, the educators participating were simply selected based upon their current teaching positions in the school district. More specifically, given that this plan proposes adding Mobile Instruction that will travel to the various schools and "classrooms", the applicant shares a plan for determining the teachers (educators) who will provide the mobile educational opportunities. These Mobile teachers will be determined based upon educator effectiveness evaluations and proper training. Little explanation is offered for the components and types of information collected for the teacher effectiveness evaluation. However, information is provided to support a ongoing high quality professional development for all teachers and for ongoing support from instructional coaches. The applicant shares a strong plan for providing effective feedback and ongoing support for new and veteran teachers by including a partnership educational professional from UNC-Charlotte.

All pertinent data for individual school demographics were included in the application Chart A-2 and fully meets the requirements for this notice as stated in the first paragraph of the comments for this section.

The applicant scores in the high range for this criterion with only one point deducted for failing to provide enough information about the specific teacher/educator selection process.

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

The applicant describes a unique plan to provide a "mobile" literacy, STEM, and Comprehensive Evening Program along with High Quality Professional Development for teachers and leaders with a focus on personalized learning environments to further support the current RTTT-State reform effort. By incorporating the flexibility of a "mobile" learning environment, the school district can increase the use of high interest activities and relevant lessons, instructional materials, resources, teachers, and integrate partnerships with experts, mentors, community stakeholders and local community colleges and universities. Furthermore, the applicant captures on the "mobile" learning environment by stating this reform effort would easily be utilized within and beyond the school district.

This personalized mobile perspective will easily be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform due to the "reaching beyond traditional school walls" as a traveling personalized learning environment. This vision and opportunities for this effort will improve learning outcome for all students, especially those who are considered "at risk".

The applicant provides strong support and clear understanding for the need of the students in the district to be served by this project and the need for creating rich mobile learning environments that can be tailored to meet the needs of individual schools and students by sharing "resources". Recognizing the need to share and create unique and rich learning environments while also minimizing the cost to duplicate resources across a school district, this applicant scores high for this criterion with one point deducted for not providing a scale-up plans to retain, recruit, and ensure equitable distribution of teachers to support the district wide plan and for not providing clarity about the quality of teachers in the Mobile learning environment and within the classroom.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has in place a multitude of summative and formative evaluations that will measure annual goals for all students, and by student subgroups:

1. EVAAS
2. GradePoint
3. OdysseyWare
4. ACT
5. Graduation Rates

The applicant provided significant information and data to support the goals for improved student outcomes for this proposed project. Based upon the various assessment measures and the data presented, there is evidence that using the proposed mobile personalized

learning environments and monitoring student learning using the above noted assessments will likely result in improved overall student learning.

Student performance is clearly outlined and noted achievement gaps are defined. Disparity between achievement groups in the areas of English and Reading assessments are identified along with goals to decrease the gaps.

Target goals for graduate rates seem reasonable and aggressive, but also attainable.

Due to the convincing evidence that this project and the quality of the reported data is likely to result in improved overall student learning a high range score for this criterion is earned. A few points were deducted because the measures for STEM proficiency are vague and fail to provide clear measures for assessing students mastery and improvements in student learning within the targeted goal of STEM proficiency.

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	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant noted changes within the past four years due to the transitions and improvements realized by the RTTT-State Grant funding. As a part of their 21st Century Classroom Project technology has been infused throughout every classroom by the addition of a computer and a projector. Also, various grade level students have been provided Chromebook devices. In addition wireless technology has been provided by the RTTT-State funding.

As part of the NC State Improvement Project (NCSIP) improvements are noted in reading scores for grades 3-8, and even greater improvements in mathematics. Increased performance was noted for schools on the various grade levels of elementary, middle and high school. With one elementary school making significant gains in math to win 2nd place in the state. At the middle school while math stayed somewhat stable in math performance, reading scores decreased slightly for Albemarle Middle School. On the high school level significant increases were noted in graduation rates. One area lacking is in the information regarding college enrollment.

Student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents via DataWise, the NC Report Cards, and the Parent Portal. School messenger is used to announce stakeholder meetings for parents and community members.

The information provided by the applicant demonstrates a clear overall record of success yet falls short in two areas: reading scores at the middle school level and fails to provide college enrollment data. Due to the two areas noted, a few points were deducted yet the applicant still scores in the high range.

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

Transparency is clearly outlined within the application resulting in full points for this criterion.

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

Clear evidence is provided to support the extent to which the Stanly County School District schools has the autonomy under the North Carolina State to implement the mobile personalized learning environment as proposed within this application. The district obtained a ESEA Waiver in May of 2012 for the Ready Initiative demonstrating that North Carolina offers conditions that are favorable for change and advancement. Additionally, the applicant describes support from the school board as well with a brief explanation for policy and procedure changes if they should be needed. The narrative describes committed relationships and partnerships with support from the community (examples are provided), executive support (administrative and technology), district support (curriculum and instruction, leadership teams), school support (administrators), and classroom support (teachers).

Based upon the proposed changes to be implemented to the current instructional model by adding Mobile Literacy and STEM traveling units, a comprehensive evening program, and systematic professional development, the applicant provides evidence to support successful conditions and sufficient autonomy for implementation of this proposed project. Many of the conditions needed or required are already in place given the RTTT-S grant award (as noted within the application). The applicant fully meets the criterion required scoring the highest score.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides a wealth of support for the proposed project. Using the recent AdvancED accreditation process, the stakeholders were identified and included in the self-study process which resulted in goals for improvement. Surveys and focus groups were also utilized to gain information and support for advancing student literacy and STEM education. The total number of stakeholders or a report of the percentage of the stakeholders engagement and support is not fully disclosed.</p> <p>The applicant describes the use of surveys (electronic, paper, and open discussion forums) to gain feedback and to guide the grant proposal development. School district educators participated via survey with the 70% of educators responded as responding. It was not noted if educators were just teachers or if educators included administrators or school leaders. The total number of participants (educators) was not clearly stated.</p> <p>Letters of Support are provided from various district, civic, community and faith-based organizations as well as institutions of higher learning and the NC RTTT director. The highest level of support was provided within each letter for the Stanly District to implement this proposed plan.</p> <p>Given the high level of support and the varied stakeholders that provided letter of supports as well as the degree of collaboration engaged for the proposal development and feedback, the applicant earns a high score for this criterion with a few points deducted for lack of evidence to support full buy in from teachers and the stakeholders.</p>		
C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)		
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant not only provides a convincing argument for the proposed mobile learning environment plan but also provides clear insight into the experiences students will have with each of the Mobile Learning Environments. The collaborative planning for engaging instruction and learning opportunities along with the alignment to current Common Core State Standards supported by literacy instruction, interesting and motivating STEM lab activities and the use of technology creates a high quality plan for personalizing instruction for all students. The utilization of STEM offers significant benefits beyond K-12 school but will serve as a spark for interest in careers in fields of STEM as well as help students to develop the type of thinking needed for the real world. The applicant includes a solid plan for helping students who struggle to stay in school to complete their coursework through a Comprehensive Evening Program. This plan will help to bridge the gap between traditional school hours and the hours needed to accommodate students who are at-risk of dropping out.</p> <p>The applicant clearly identifies how the implementation of this project will increase student engagement and will allow flexibility in meeting the needs of all students, but especially those at risk. Opportunities for advancing and remediation will be offered via supplemented software programs (Gradpoint). Students will engage in relevant learning environments with high quality instruction and experiences that will foster a sense of learning and the world around them. The applicant describes experiences that will allow students to fully engage and see relevance.</p> <p>Ongoing assessment tools are described with by the applicant as well as the tracking system described previous in the document is referenced in this section. One-on-One evaluations will be held 3 times a year in the early grades to help students make transitions in reading. Teachers will use formative feedback assessments to communicate student performance as well. One area not fully disclosed is communication and inclusion of parents in this section. However, as mentioned previously the school system does have an online grading system that parents can access.</p> <p>The goals of the project are additionally supported by the current reform efforts of the State of North Carolina which has adopted the CCSS, is a RTTT-State, received a Wavier for NCLB, a focus on literacy skills, as well as many other smaller programs and initiative noted in the application.</p> <p>The involvement of multiple reform efforts clearly demonstrates the commitment toward ambitious goals focused on preparing students to enter the workforce and/or higher education.</p> <p>The applicant earns a score in the high range for presenting a solid convincing argument for this high-quality dynamic plan along with clarification of the flexibility of the mobile and evening programs with a few points deducted for failing to provide clarification regarding feedback that will be provided to parents.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed description of the teaching and learning plan designed for educators and administrators for the Stanly School District. Due to restriction of funds in recent years the school district has downsized and restructured their professional development plan to move to using the “train the trainer” model in an effort to be more efficient and yet productive. The district has also implemented the use of various technology applications to help with collaboration, training, as well as working together to complete curriculum mapping for the implementation of Common Core Essential Standards. This district has learned to work smarter by using technology and minimizing cost associated with professional development including training to enhance the learning environment through the use of instructional strategies. Partnerships with institutions of higher learning through the use of PBLs has been implemented to help the educators to improve their instructional practices.

Moving forward with this current proposed reform project, the applicant outlines greater emphasis on curriculum planning to include multidisciplinary unit and effective instructional strategies that will help them to create the personalized learning environments as mentioned previously. The plan proposes to use the research based UDL while addressing literacy and STEM.

The applicant provides a clear overview of the ongoing evaluation process and provides a detailed **professional development chart** to support the evaluation process stating that professional development is a critical component of this plan. Goals are clearly stated for professional development with specific professional development topic training identified (Universal Design for Learning, Analyzing Student Data, Motivating Students, Literacy Across the Curriculum, STEM Education and Strategies, Utilizing college and career readiness assessment plan, and International education opportunities) all of which support the goals of this project. Along with the topics for PD are identified teachers to be involved, the timeline and mode for delivery, and the responsible parties to lead or organize the training.

All teachers and administrators from the district are included within this proposal and will be evaluated using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System.

Feedback on both the evaluation and the teacher side is within the evaluation plan. Self-assessment is also included within the educator evaluation requiring educators to assess their own performance, strengths and weakness against the evaluation standards.

In addition to the solid proposed professional development and evaluation, an emphasis is placed on preparing the children of this district for the workforce with a focus on college and career readiness and also international education opportunities. The inclusion of international educational opportunities is visionary and will help to extend the students perspective of themselves and the vastness of the world beyond their local environment.

The detailed measures described for this criterion are engaging and exceed the requirements as defined. The degree to which the applicant seeks to prepare educators are solid and will enable this project to be successful.

The applicant scores extremely high for this criterion with no loss of points for exceeding the requirements by including international educational opportunities which was a pleasant bonus.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A well-defined outline of the practices, policies, and rules that will be used to facilitate the personalized and mobile learning environments are presented by the applicant . A strong leadership support team from the school district central office will be organized under a project director. The expected qualifications and job description for the director are strong, reasonable and clearly defined. Support staff job descriptions include layers of tasks to monitor budgeting and instructional practices across the districts with careful attention given to school sites and specific students needs are clearly noted as well. A variety of assessments and progress monitors are provided and well-defined with the expectation of helping the leadership staff to make decisions that will keep the project moving forward to meet targeted goals.

The school leadership teams are appropriate in that they will include individual school administrators and the school improvement team. A variety of assessments and progress monitors are provided and well-designed with the expectation of helping the leadership staff to make decisions that will keep the project moving forward to meet targeted goals. While the applicant describes purposeful collaboration between the project leadership team and the school, autonomy is stated to remain with individual schools which will support the success of this proposed project. The applicant provide good evidence through example to support the conditions for autonomy are present to make decisions in regard to school schedules, budgets, and staff roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, a collaborative relationship is clearly described between the director of the project, school administrators ,and staff that will allow the director to help address specific needs of students and populations of students to provide for true personalized learning experiences. This type of open

collaboration/partnership will help this project to be successful.

The nature of the proposed project allows students opportunities to experience learning in a variety of venues (Literacy and STEM Mobile, Evening Program) through personalized lessons. Each of the proposed instructional plans are provide a **rich** unique opportunity for students to repeat and master the standards and expectations in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the proposed instructional programs are flexible and designed to be modified in a scaffolding manner using inquiry based instructional practices. This type of learning aligns perfectly with the defined expectations of personalized learning environments where students are engaged in instruction that meets their personal learning needs rather than a packaged type "one size fits all" plan. With the flexibility of this proposed project the likelihood that the special needs of students with disabilities and ELL will be addressed. As an added bonus of this proposed project, the applicant included provisions for bridging the gap between home and school. While this is not considered within the score for this criterion, it is worthy of noting.

The Applicant earns the highest score for criterion for presenting a high-quality plan that provides evidence that the school districts has the practices, policies and rules in place to support the proposed project implementation.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Literacy and STEM Mobile bus, the flexibilty of the comprehensive evening program, and the professional development training for teachers included in this proposed plan ensures that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have access to the learning resources needed. The applicant clearly identifies measures that will assure that equity and access remains stable. Measures to maintain the mobile vehicles and schedules of usage are identified as well as organization of instructional practices.

Technology support is essential for the success of this proposed project, the applicant provides protocols for assuring the technology support is in place at all times.

Parent Portal is said to be used to communicate with parents about attendance, discipline, mid-term and year-end grades and that parents can provide feedback via the portal as well. Additionally, the applicant provides provisions for providing online support to parents who may be "unfamiliar with technology". Parent and community information nights (Family Reading nights, FAFSA Nights, and Career Awareness Nights) will also be offered to provide support to parents. Furthermore, "On-site instructional technology support persons can serve as peer coaches to parents" who might need additional support.

The IIS system is used to support teachers in instructional improvement and provides a host for data support. The applicant provides a brief but sufficient overview of how the IIS can be used by students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

The comprehensive policy and infrastructure described by the applicant earns in the high range for this criterion with one point deducted for lack of evidence to the overall quality of parental engagement plan. Specific measures to assure that all parents are informed and engaged is not provided within the narrative.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a well-developed continuous improvement cycle model - Plan, Do, Study, Act. This model is well recognized and provides for assessment, reflection, and adjustments as warranted by this initiative. In addition the applicant describes a strong Tier leveling from the district level, to school level, and then on the classroom level. The Tier leveling will help the district to identify strengths and weakness of the implementation plan and to address the weakness. By addressing weaknesses, ongoing and continuous improvement can be made when needed.

School Improvement Teams are already in place and seem to have a well-organized system for analyzing data sources, programs to determine corrections or improvements that may be needed for teachers and students. The plan is deemed high quality for the multiple layers and check points. However, communication to the public seems to be limited to annual reporting in a only a few media venues.

While the applicant provided a high-quality plan for monitoring and making adjustments to the proposed project through the use of the Tier leveling, communication or dissemination of the results or progress seem limited. A point is deducted for lack of high quality

reporting.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant included a detailed ongoing communication and engagement plan. The plan offers details about how the district and schools communicate with stakeholders. The methods are varied and seem to span across all types of communication including communication methods requiring personal contact, technology, personal notes home to parents, and the use of new media (there are many more stated). Internal communication is described in levels and follow a traditional format for district, school, and teacher communication and engagement.</p> <p>The applicant describes a strong plan that provides multiple opportunities for stakeholders to engage in ongoing communication both inside the organization and outside of the organization. The applicant scores in the high range with one point deducted for failing to provide clear timelines or increments for ongoing communication.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup with annual targets are provided for literacy and math (grades 3,4,6, & 7); reading, math, and science (5 & 8); English 1, Biology, and Algebra 1 (grades 8-12). There are no annual target data offered for K-2 except with regard to ELL.</p> <p>The applicant lacks current data due to a delay in reporting from North Carolina, the previous year data was used as a baseline. The applicant selected performance measures that seem reasonable given the data will provide a longitudinal view of student performance (NC EVAAS). The measures are rigorous, timely, and formative in that they are stated to align with College and Career-Readiness goals. Middle school and high school measures include science and math along with reading or English depending on the level.</p> <p>Baseline data for each gradeband is provided with subgroups identified with clear performance measure indicators. The indicators are reasonable and will provide a consistent measure for implementation progress and overall success of this proposed project plan.</p> <p>While this plan clearly outlines cognitive academic measures and indicators, it lacks health and social-emotional indicators as well as true college and career indicators. The applicant earns a mid-range score for this criterion because of the lack of health and social-emotional indicators and for failing to identify a true college and career measure beyond academic scores in math, science, and reading/English. Additionally, a point was deducted for failing to provide target data for K-2 and for using not providing current data as a baseline.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This section was not included in the document. Failure to provide evidence in this section significantly impacts the evaluation of this criterion.</p> <p>A single point was earned for this criterion given that discussion was provided with the application regarding the use of a Tier Leveling program for evaluation which would allow the district to evaluate the effectiveness of investments for this project.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A exhaustive, extraordinary detailed budget narrative describing all funding needed for the overall proposed project as well as line-item descriptions for each sub-project level funding is provided. The overall project as well as sub-project funding seems reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of this project. A close review of each expenditure reveals that this applicant is very detailed oriented and included precise numbers items that are commonly overlooked such as postal expenses. Funds that are one-time investments such as the Literacy and STEM bus and upgrades to technology infrastructure are clearly noted while ongoing operational costs for fuel were estimated with a rationale for the estimated costs.</p>		

The abundance of detail and clarity for this criterion is exceptional. The applicant earns the highest score for this criterion.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Sustainability for this project is strong given the number and varied community, local and state government partnerships associated with the project. The overall plan to include support from state and local government leader seems strong based upon the letters of support and the already existing revenue sources. Given the measures and details offered in the proposed budget with the identified one-time investments versus the long term ongoing costs, the likelihood for sustainability of this project is strong. Overall, the proposed budget plan is of high-quality and integrates measures for sustainability with the use of state and local government revenues and community contributions/partnerships.

The applicant earns a high range score for this criterion. While the applicant does provide evidence of support from the community, local and state government after this grant funding has ended, two points were deducted for failing to provide a high quality proposed budget for sustaining the project after the grant funding period. Clear timelines and deliverables within the sustainability plan for the investments are not provided.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high quality proposal for integrating public and private resources in a partnership that would provide additional support to the schools and students served in Stanly County School district. A detailed and comprehensive plan is presented to include a public health initiative to prevent childhood obesity. The integration of this public health initiative perfectly aligns with the STEM Mobile instructional unit. Additional community agencies are identified with detailed descriptions of their contribution to Stanly County Schools and how their partnership strongly supports this proposed project via literacy, STEM and college and career programs. The support provided and offered from these community partnerships are strong and multi-layered with great connectivity. The infrastructure of the partnerships and vestedness of these relationships provides convincing support of the potential this project has to make a significant difference in the lives of the students served by the project as well as the sustainability of this plan. One of the greatest benefits noted from these partnerships are the connectiveness between home and school.

The performance measures proposed align with the previous performance measures proposed earlier in this application, they are ambitious yet achievable. With the focused attention on subgroups and preparedness for bridging the gap between home, school, and college and career, the criterion is fully met for the competitive preference priority. A focus on meeting the health and academic needs of sub-groups will increase the overall population and student academic achievement.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a very elaborate, detailed plan that is sustainable with the help and assistance of the community, state and local government after this reform effort has ended. The outlined plan for implementing Mobile learning and evening programs to all the students in the school district with over 56% of the students served failing in the low-income sub-group will surely benefit from the accessibility to the unique personalized learning environments. Teaching and learning will be improved to the extent that students will be actively engaged in flexible instructional experiences that are rich in content yet interesting and relevant. High School students struggling to stay in school will be offered an evening option to complete their coursework. Teachers will be provided comprehensive high quality professional development training to help them to meet the needs of all students with focused concentration on decreasing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates. The proposed personalized learning environment is unique, ambitious, and achievable fully meeting the criterion of Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	185
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