



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0348WA-1 for Bremerton School District #100c

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision in this plan targets early intervention by aligning Pre-K through 3rd grade, and connecting pre-school providers to elementary schools. It includes the system spectrum from students, teachers, and leaders to early childhood providers, family and community.</p> <p>The vision identifies improvements in instruction, including academically, socially, developmentally, and emotionally. The approach includes a focus on data systems, improving human capital (teachers and leaders), turning around lowest achieving schools, and a particular focus on individualizing instruction.</p> <p>The approach is articulated systemically; coherence from Pre-K through grade 3 is mentioned repeatedly. The Common Core is identified as one vehicle to help achieve alignment and coherence. While the plan articulates the importance of connecting prior and next grade-levels, only one district of the total three actually addresses how the work will connect to grade 4 and beyond, which slightly weakened the score. Additionally, much of these descriptions are too broad to fully understand details such as how the plan will connect to college, how data will be collected and used, and how classroom instruction will change.</p> <p>Finally, the reform vision is well supported by reputable research in early childhood education.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Application identifies three districts to participate in a Pre-K through 3rd grade consortium. Selection was based on the district's previous work and plans on implementing similar Pre-K - 3 programs. Because all three districts experience high rates of student mobility, they selected all of their elementary schools for participation. The elementary schools across the three districts total 40, which is a favorable number for piloting and testing a reform approach. Across the schools, 68% of the students are identified as low-income. Several schools have very high poverty rates, 14 have rates of 100%, and seven have rates above 36%, adding interesting contrast for testing activities and results. Counts and percentages are clearly laid out in a table describing the relevant categories required in the application.</p> <p>The selection of all elementary schools, many of which have high rates of poverty, across three districts with varying degrees of knowledge and experience in implementing Pre-K through 3rd grade programs makes this a strong approach to program implementation.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Scalability has great potential with this project. As a Consortium, program participants will be able to share what they learn about the program in regularly scheduled meetings and webinars and other activities mentioned in the application. Additionally, the Consortium plans on sharing professional development, which is also useful for testing the training provided across systems and policies.</p> <p>To tie the work beyond the districts and the project, Lansing School District has a State Supt. for Public Instruction participating with professional development, which may result in application across other districts in that state. Additionally, the three districts have representatives that are serving on several state and national committees, and the Gates Foundation is identified as a partner; all great vehicles for sharing what is learned beyond the scope of the project.</p> <p>Finally, the application mentioned more than once the desire for the work to inform policy, and to increase alignment at the</p>		

front-end of the Pre-K - 12 pipeline, both of which have scaling implications.

The only point where the application misses a scaling opportunity is that Lansing is the only district that specifically mentions scaling the work beyond grade 3, to continue the alignment and improvement process.

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

Summary assessments for the 3 districts are listed as follows:

Bremerton: Target outcomes on the state assessment are incremental but seem reasonable. Could be higher. For example grade 3 math in SY 2011 overall is 65.4, and is targeted to 86.8 post grant. This is achievable, but conservative. For sub-groups in the same grade/subject, Hispanic students start lower, SY 2011 they are at 44.3, and are targeted for 72.2 post-grant. This is also reasonable, but lower than targets for white students same grade/subject post-grant; targeted at 87.1. This would still leave over a 10 point gap between White and Hispanic students. This type of remaining target gap between White/Asian and other minority sub-pops holds true throughout grades and subjects.

graduation: SY 2011 not out yet. Moves from 84.6% in SY 2012 to 90.7% post grant.

college: SY 2012 52% to 56% post grant. Given the investment in early childhood, this seems low. Did not provide disaggregated college rates.

Everett: target outcomes on state assessment begin more incremental in grade 3. For all students, SY 2011, they begin at 78.0, and are targeted for 88 post grant. White students are targeted post-grant in the same grade/subject at 89.9, while Hispanic students are projected at 79.7, leaving an approximate ten point gap. This pattern holds true across grades and subjects. While the targets are reasonable, because this district starts somewhat higher, targets for post grant could potentially be higher, particularly for African American and Hispanic students.

graduation: SY 2011 not out yet. Moves from 87.8% in 2012 to 92.7% post-grant

college: Moves from SY 2010 at 64.7 to 82.4 post grant.

Lansing: In grade 3 reading overall, moves from SY 2011 at 49.3 to approximately 95%. This high target holds true for all sub-populations, and across grades and subjects. These targets are ambitious and aimed toward increasing achievement in struggling student groups.

graduation: Moves from 2011 50.7% (grad calculation changed that year) to 81.6% post grant.

college: state does not provide this data. Would be important for district to find a source for this data.

The gap analyses for the three districts are similar to their summary assessment data, with Lansing projecting smaller gaps in the first post-grant year.

performance information for the specific schools listed in the application was not provided.

Overall, between the three districts, target performance strikes an acceptable balance between being reasonable yet ambitious. However, Lansing was the only district that set sub-population targets to more aggressively close ethnic and income achievement gaps.

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:

Bremerton: graduation rate increased between 2005 and 2009 from 59.2% to 87.2%, a noteworthy increase they attribute to an infusion of quality college preparation and support programs. Additionally, the district's turnaround strategy for their lowest-performing elementary school resulted in an achievement increase recognized by the state through an achievement gap award. However, the district presentation of DIBELS literacy test results are confusing. They do increase between Kinder and grade 3, from 37 in 2007 to 58 in 2011 for Kinder, however, 1st grade results across the year are higher than the other grades, and decrease over time, moving from 72 in 2007 to 63 in 2011.

An achievement gap chart for the turnaround school, Naval Avenue, shows minority students outperforming White and Asian students. However, that gap decrease is partially accomplished through a decrease in performance by Whites and Asians, who move on that scale from approximately 5.75 down to 5.1 In West Hills elementary, the gap is also decreased, however, the White/Asian students move from 5.2 in 2008 to 2.7 in 2009, and then 4 in 2010, while minority students moved from 4.3 to 1.8 and then 5 in 2010. This evidence yielded an 8 on this measure.

Data is available in this district; teams review it through a weekly RTI process.

Everett: Graduation increased from 78% to 88% between 2008 and 2011. They attribute this increase to interventions provided by the On Time Graduation Committee. Additionally, the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses increased, and more importantly, the number scoring a 3 or better increased between 2009 and 2011 from 434 to 547. However, it would be helpful to see these results disaggregated by student populations.

Achievement scores in reading in the district have remained flat over time, and in some cases decreased. The application identifies elementary reading achievement as a concern in the district; prompting this application. These results do not show much improvement; for example, between 2008 and 2011, 10th grade reading moved down from 85.7% to 83.5%, 8th from 74.9% to 78%, and grade 3 from 73.8% to 71.%.

The district shows good improvement in their Title 1 elementary school. Minority students moved from a 3.4 on the scale in 2008 to 6.2; a large increase. White performance increased between 2008 and 2009 from 3.6 to 6, and remained the same in 2010. However, in 2010, minority performance was higher, at 6.2, showing a true gap decrease.

Data is accessible in this district through a new data system, which is also accessible to students and parents.

While this district has some challenges, it made some marked improvements in its most struggling school, earning it a 10 on this section.

Lansing: The superintendent in Lansing is new, and is currently working on re-organizing the district to yield more consist performance and improvement. During the first year of their new grade configuration, one school moved from the 3rd percentile of the state's bottom performance list up to 18th percentile in one year's time; showing evidence of strong early improvement.

Sharing of performance data is not as strong in this district. It is limited to summative data for students and parents in grade cards and on a website.

While this district is in very early phases of being able to show improvement, they have some evidence of success, earning it an 8. The total rank when adding the numbers is 26, when averaged becomes an 8+. The 9 score yields a point bump to account for the district's short reform timeline, and to credit their being able to identify the levers that led to their successes.

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

Bremerton: Actual individual or school-level personnel salaries available only through Public Records Request. Salary schedules are posted. Budget information is available through public forums and to parents. Budget plans presented in board meetings and posted on the website. No other transparency processes were described. These dissemination methods provide limited access for stakeholders with limited internet access or time to attend meetings.

Everett: Individual and personal salaries are not published, but general percentages in budget categories are pubic, also in the form of comparisons to other districts. District budget is available online, and for the upcoming ear, the bargaining agreement for teachers will be posted online, including the salary schedule. These dissemination options have the same limitations as mentioned for Bremerton.

Lansing: School and individual salaries are not published. During the budget process school-level allocations are available on the district website.

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

The application identifies several policy areas implemented by Washington that have helped spark reform and innovation for districts in the state, many of which are supportive of early learning approaches. Those activities include the establishment of early learning standards from birth to Kinder, creation of an agency to oversee early learning programs, funding full day Kinder targeting low-income families first, adoption of high quality early learning assessments, and adoption of the common core

standards. Regarding flexibility, Everett is able to provide weekly meeting time for teachers through their collective bargaining agreement. Additionally, the state board is allowing districts to apply for a waiver to reduce instructional hours in order to increase time spent with parents and families. While this policy is intended to support family connections, it may be counter-productive for increasing the quality of instruction.

Michigan is known for having high quality state standards and a strong investment in a P-20 pipeline. The state DOE is currently pursuing funding for several high quality early childhood programs, and the state superintendent for public instruction is personally involved in supporting the district's Pre-K - 3 initiatives.

No specific mention of how the state or district provides flexibility for personalization.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Enclosed in this application were dozens of letters from various levels and types of agencies supporting this proposal, showing strong stakeholder support.

Bremerton: Prek-3rd Grade leadership group comprised of district and pre-school representatives regularly monitor and share information via an assessment loop on the progress of their work. During the development of the plan, district leadership presented draft plans to learning providers, the school board, parents, and the teachers union to seek input. The union president regularly attended weekly planning calls.

This engagement as described appeared minimal and earned a 6.

Everett: Engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including older students, in their 2010 strategic plan, which formalized and articulated the district's Pre-K - 3rd grade initiatives. Parent and community feedback is solicited regularly, particularly to seek input on family engagement. Teachers are very involved on various aspects of the work, including the development of walk through processes and assessments. District and building leaders are also involved in the plan, and in trainings related to work outlined in the plan, as well as the president of the teacher's union. This engagement involved multiple stakeholders, frequent touch-points over time, and evidence of reciprocal engagement, earning it a 10.

Lansing held community forums to develop the plan, including members of local higher education institutions. The superintendent met with various community stakeholders. Although key stakeholders, including the union president and teachers, are mentioned in the groups attending the meetings, there are little specifics on how each stakeholder group was engaged, how often, and to what extent that engagement was active vs. passive, earning it a 5.

Did not see mention of how a larger community related to the entire consortium was engaged. Final score represents an average of the 3 scores assigned for each district.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Consortium identified a common gap in school selection. Due to high student mobility, they identified the need to include every elementary school in the plan, rather than just select one. Other gaps were outlined in chart-form by district in the form of goals (gaps), activities, timelines, deliverables, and who is responsible.

Bremerton: This chart contains insufficient details either in the goal, activities, or deliverables to provide enough information to map what is present, missing, and needed. For example, the first goal is to use Common Core to reframe teaching in early grades, yet those grades are not identified. Unclear whether it is K-3, or K-12. Activities for that goal are to reframe instruction to reduce reliance on curriculum to allow for individualization. Unclear how that will be done. The deliverable for that activity is reading and math instructional strategies, which is very general.

Under the goal to develop teacher and principal evaluation, the activity cites, "remain current on state efforts to develop evaluation," rather than citing what the district itself wants to gain from the system. What will the district do if what the state produces does not meet their needs? Under professional development, the goal "sustain and enhance past professional development" lacks detail on what is present and what is needed for this plan.

Everett: This chart has more details on gaps. For example, "expand WaKIDS use from 50% of kinder classrooms to 100%" is clear. However, the activities do not explain how that increase will be facilitated; it just mentions how the tool and its results will be used. This plan is also not clear about professional development, and uses the same language that appeared in Bremerton's professional development goal; sustain and enhance. Activities under that goal are a bit more clear, provide high quality p.d. around rigor, clear mastery targets, and strategies for assessment. Unclear what will change in the training content to implement the program.

Lansing: Goals track more closely to activities and deliverables, yet are still not clear for understanding gaps. Professional development goal is stated for district, school, and grade levels, yet it is unclear other than it being implemented five times a year what the focus will be to support the program.

Overall the three plans have the right pieces to address instruction, professional development, data use, collaborative groups, early learning, but are not very specific to clearly understand the work.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides a well detailed explanation on how learning is envisioned to support personalized learning success for students in the early grades. The application mentions the need for early learning, rigor, strong cognitive and non-cognitive skills, maintaining balanced and student-centered curricula, and ongoing intentional use of data. The application clearly describes the important tenants of each of these categories, supported by reputable early childhood research.

Supporting personalized learning is a strong area in this application, which also strengthens the potential to deepen student learning by connecting learning to children’s culture and experiences. The approach describes using intentional student-centered instruction that aims to connect content to students’ personal experiences. Being able to master critical content is embedded in the many development skills addressed in this program, to include working on attention, self-regulation, executive function, and motivation.

Regarding content, the application highlights personalizing instruction tied to Common Core standards while ensuring that learning utilizes various modalities, particularly those that nurture higher-order thinking such as analyzing and synthesizing.

What is not mentioned except in a brief reference in the beginning is college readiness. While the application asserts that strong early learning can bolster college success, there is no mention of tying the work to college-readiness, or in building a college going culture with students in the early grades. There is also little mention on how technology might be used to enhance and personalize instruction.

Using data regularly, and having time available to examine data is mentioned, as is the use of data inquiry as an ongoing process to connect data, teaching, and student products in the improvement process.

These many elements that cover all the important aspects of early learning to set a strong cognitive and non-cognitive foundation illustrate a strong learning program for students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Consortium is focusing on teachers and leaders by developing a culture of inquiry, focusing on the role of the principal, and using data to inform instruction and support needs. These areas are complex and require structure, clarity, and a great deal of training. While professional development is not clearly outlined in this section, there are activities referenced throughout the application, to include:

- A consortium-wide professional development program
- Funds for substitutes so that teachers can attend training
- Training through professional learning communities
- Trainers that will come into the districts, as well as use of a trainer of trainer model
- Opportunities to observe other teachers and conduct learning walks
- Collaborative book studies

Although activities are not outlined clearly, they appear to be planned as a combination of ongoing regular training through observations and PLCs, and through quarterly symposiums, trainings, and Webinars. Makes it difficult to discern how these resources will be strategically used, and it is a concern that so much training rests on quarterly symposiums and webinars.

The explanation on how principals will be supported is stronger. It cites the provision of training in child development and learning sequencing for principals to be an important focus; a strong addition to an area traditionally not addressed in principal training. Some areas of leader training are not as clear. The application identifies the importance of countering deficient theories attached to certain groups, yet does not explain how that will be approached.

The application also identifies the need for leaders to increase the number of students with high quality teachers, yet activities on how to accomplish that complex goal are limited to using data to view practice. No mention of how teachers or leaders will be recruited, hired, trained, placed, or retained.

The use of data to support the program is outlined in relatively clear detail. However, it is unclear how various system actors will be trained to interpret and use data.

The one area that lacks proactive action to support teachers and leaders is in the area of teacher and leader evaluations, which asserts that whatever the state develops and adopts will be used. No other mention of other tools other than walk-throughs for teachers is mentioned.

Also not mentioned are how various high quality resources will be leveraged for students and teachers, or processes for matching student interventions to their needs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Consortium is governed by a steering committee comprising of two representatives from each district; one central office and one school leader. This group will seek input from other various working groups and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Regarding autonomy and flexibility, the application mentions that each district will provide flexibility permissible by their own policies and agreements, and that all the districts provide time for teachers to review data and engage in professional development. Seeing a commitment toward more flexibility and having desirable flexibilities outlined as a goal would be preferable.</p> <p>There is no mention of how each district will organize their central office to support the program, other than Lansing in a previous section mentioned their focus on re-configuring grade level structures to better align the instructional program.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Bremerton district provides a variety of programs for special populations, including Spanish immersion, STEM, and ELL programs. They also provide before-and after school programs, and food service programs. Teachers in the district have a web-based system to share best practices and materials, and the district is building a parent portal for families to learn about Common Core and access books. No mention on what resources will be provided to families that do not have internet access.</p> <p>Everett works with parents prior to the start of school through Family Connections conferences where they create goals with teachers for their children, and receive ongoing support to monitor their child's progress. The district's pre-school partners engage in similar programs, and early childhood providers conduct home visits early in the year.</p> <p>District curriculum is available online, and many teachers communicate about their classrooms through their own websites. Classrooms in both the district and pre-school partners have the infrastructure to support their computer technology needs.</p> <p>A parent portal is available for parents, as well as the computer lab and school library for parents without internet access.</p> <p>Lansing has a long-standing Parent Resource Center staffed with two Parent Coordinators who provide support for parents in the community. Each school engages in parent involvement activities, and connections are further made through the district's cable channel.</p> <p>For instruction, the district uses the iCollaborate project to personalize learning and help maximize instructional learning time. To support families at home, the district offers a variety of online learning tools that provide tutorials, and computers are available at the Parent Resource Centers for parents with limited internet access.</p> <p>Regarding access to systems to upload and access data, Bremerton provides access to several online academic programs to families; Everett launched a new integrated web-based data system that parents can access, and the state is developing a preschool data management system. This is a strong area for Everett. Regarding Lansing, an online system called EdLine is used to communicate student progress to parents, which can also incorporate teacher pages to demonstrate what is being</p>		

taught in the classroom.

Regarding connected data systems, Bremerton appears to have data sources housed in various systems that currently rely on being shared by the users, rather than in a connected system. Mentioned earlier, Everett's new system was designed to integrate their various data sources, and Lansing pulls together data from various systems into a School Dashboard. Overall the consortium does not appear to coherent means to collect and analyze data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The improvement process described in the application focuses on measuring progress at the district, school, classroom, and teacher levels. The approach references: using multiple sources of data to measure those levels; using multiple indicators of cognitive and non-cognitive skills; providing personnel support and time to collaborate around data; and to provide opportunity for system actors to work within a peer network.</p> <p>Information dissemination, or sharing lessons, is described as occurring between central office and schools; and across the three consortium districts in regards to what is learned from Consortium activities, as well as what is integrated into the schools and districts.</p> <p>The improvement process itself is described as collecting and analyzing data, putting structures in place for professional learning communities and data teams, providing on-going professional development, gaining insight from families; and using data to inform policy and practice decisions.</p> <p>While these broad categories are thorough, the application does not address specifics on how they will be executed. For example, under the goal "foster shared learning between schools and districts," activities are described in general terms, the "district-specific projects." The deliverables for that goal are "structures that support communication and dialogue." This section would have benefitted greatly from a lot more detail about how the activities would be structured processes and how and what information will be shared, to what audiences.</p> <p>This section also lacks information on how goal activities will be adjusted based on timely information, or who is in charge of the revision process, and how changes would be communicated.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Application asserts that sharing information learned through the project is important, both internally in the districts and across the consortium, as well as externally to inform policy and practice. Venues identified include memos and meetings discussing progress and challenges; summer institutes; webinars; and via presentations and articles in various community forums and print options.</p> <p>What is not mentioned in the application is how communication will actively engage various stakeholders. Rather, the activities appear to be primarily passive, and are described with words like "share," "present" or through print dissemination. There does not appear to be purposeful information exchange or feedback solicitation in this section. Adding in words like dialogue, or soliciting feedback would make this section stronger.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Consortium-wide assessments are also commonly accepted valid tests used to measure various aspects of language, cognition, as non-cognitive elements such as motivation. Having uniform data on these important development elements across numerous schools will add valuable information for personalizing education, and for understanding how these areas impact early learning in Pre-K – 3rd grade.</p> <p>An existing Framework on Pre-K -3rd grade programs was also selected to measure program quality across the grades addressed in this program. To assess learning experiences for children in classrooms, a 41-item snapshot assessment will be used. Finally, a classroom observation instrument is identified to measure the quality of the classroom environment across the</p>		

Consortium.

Some of the measurements, like state assessments, will provide summative information at the end of the year. However, the majority of the assessments are designed to provide interim information, varying from three times a year to more frequently. While the majority of the assessments will provide valid and useful information, the one measure that might not provide as much information is the "Frame Work" tool, which is designed as a self-assessment.

There was little mention of how assessment instruments would be reviewed or adjusted in the case that they do not yield appropriate information.

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

This section identifies broad research questions to be addressed through an external evaluator that will measure program inputs at the district, school, classroom, and student levels, as well as family engagement. While there are instruments identified for each of these broad areas, they seem too broad to discern how specific inputs will be assessed. It is unclear how professional development or the use of data will be assessed, or the effectiveness of the data inquiry process. This section is not detailed enough to fully understand how specific program inputs will be monitored, assessed, and adjusted.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

The budgets for the three separate district projects, as well as the leverage and evaluation projects appear reasonable. The positions are clearly described, and consumable vs. ongoing costs are highlighted. The budget appears to account for the activities necessary to implement the grant, including the development of assessments, purchase of contract work, and mechanisms to train and meet across districts and with the pre-school sector. There is no identification of other budgets to be used; a major requirement of F) 1c.

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

There are several strong sustainability elements to this proposal. One is the focus on early learning, and aligning instruction across Pre-K through grade 3. Connecting down to pre-school service providers also supports the alignment and scalability of this process; it builds more awareness between early learning providers and schools of what needs to be in place at each grade-level transition from Pre-K to 3. Extending the aligning past grade 3 would strengthen the ability of this work to extend beyond the early grades; an element that is missing from this proposal.

Focusing on all aspects of child-development, and personalizing learning also aids sustainability to this work; more leaders and teachers can use their awareness to better prepare students.

The application highlights that the budgets are designed to be sustained with minimal ongoing expense, which is important for sustainability. Other sustainability mechanisms mentioned are the use of in-kind funds like title I, and the ROI gained from the creation of stronger data systems that will sustain over time.

Designing this work as a Consortium lends to the ability to increase capacity across a broader spectrum of stakeholders. Additionally, the application mentioned that demonstration sties will be developed to optimize learning gained from the project.

The one area not mentioned is how human capital will be sustained, in terms of succession planning, or retaining teachers that are already trained for the program. Ensuring workforce stability would aid in maximizing the investment in professional development for this project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The program described in this application aims to create a better aligned and more consistent early childhood educational experience for Pre- 3rd grade students by partnering with pre-school operations, and identifying the important cognitive and non-cognitive skills that are important for school success. Rather than treating Pre-K separately, this project attempts to align and integrate Pre-K -- 3rd grade within each district's strategy, through the support of various stakeholders. Additionally, this approach seems well supported by the policies in two states that house the three districts.

There are performance measures stated in the application, which also account for measuring learning prior to Kinder. The one measure that is not as strong is the "Frame work for Planning," cited as the tool to measure school and district improvement. As a self-assessment tool, it may not do a good job of identifying district and school needs as a more objective measure could.

While the application cites strong partnerships and system alignment, what is not mentioned is how the overall project will be managed and monitored, and what mechanisms are in place to amend or revise the plan. Since this plan works across districts and in two different states, coordinating the monitoring and adjustment process is important to maintain focus, leverage resources, and maximize what is learned.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This application clearly articulates how it aims to improve student achievement by focusing on the alignment and strengthening of Pre-K - 3rd grade instruction. The instructional approaches described are comprehensive, and address what early learning literature cites as important. It also maximizes the opportunity to learn across three districts in various phases of Pre-K - 3rd grade work. While each district has its unique strengths and weaknesses in various areas of this application, the collective work is strong, and bodes well for creating conditions to exchange knowledge and information.

Total	210	142
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Technical Review Form

Application #0348WA-2 for Bremerton School District #100c

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly presents its reform vision grounded in the four educational assurance areas and articulates a clear and credible approach. The applicant includes one lead LEA and two member LEAs. With a lead and member LEAs\ in

Washington and a member LEA in Lansing, MI, the applicant clearly identifies essential elements of the preK-3 approaches in all three districts and demonstrates the commitment of each to strengthening PreK-3rd grade education. Combined, the grant application will include 40 elementary schools serving 12,811 students. The applicant's focus is on improving children's learning opportunities and closing achievement gaps before 3rd grade. The applicant presents a research-supported rationale for its proposed approach, grounded in research studies by notable entities, such as the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) and the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. Table I provides a crosswalk clearly demonstrating how the applicant's proposed approaches aligns with each of the required Race to the Top Assurances. For example, student achievement is accelerated through incorporation of Common Core State Standards and state early learning standards in high quality instruction through curricula that are aligned at each age/grade level. Student learning is deepened through developmentally appropriate instruction in reading and math as social/emotional development is facilitated. Personalize student support is at the heart of developmentally appropriate practice. Systematic use of data allows the ability to improve and personalize learning through individualized instruction, whether in community-based private or non-profit early learning programs or through public schools.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly articulates the circumstances that led to formation of their consortium, primarily the work each district had already begun focused on PreK-3rd grade reform, as well as their connections through the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill and the University of Washington College of Education. The applicant's approach focuses on strengthening efforts in each individual school district to personalize the learning environment, while also supporting collaboration and leveraging information and expertise across the three school districts regarding effective approaches. The districts have identified three common research questions to guide efforts in each district, as well as two inter-district initiatives that will span all participating districts, including professional learning communities and comparative data analysis. Because the focus is on the PreK-3rd grade band, all elementary schools in each of the three participating districts will participate. The applicant explains that all schools will participate because the districts are interested in district-wide impact and they understand the effects of within-district student mobility. The project spans 40 schools, 12,811 students, of whom more than 68% are low-income. The two Washington school districts (Bremerton and Everett) will also include community-based early learning programs, but they are not included in the overall participation counts. All required information for each of the 40 participating elementary schools is provided by the applicant in Table 3.

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a theory of change and conceptual framework that will guide its efforts. Within district and between districts shared initiatives are all designed to produce improved student achievement and decrease achievement gaps by focusing on the PreK-3rd grades. Unique elements of the approach are its focus on addressing achievement gaps early, focusing on processes such as collaborative inquiry, and focus on relationships through vertical and horizontal teams. The applicant's Table 4 lists goals, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible party for its high quality plan for supporting change within the LEAs and beyond. While the table provides very basic information, it does not effectively demonstrate a high-quality plan for scale-up and district-wide change beyond the PreK-3 level in the participating districts. The activities and deliverables seem very limited in scope and influence (e.g., 3 day summer institutes, webinars, reports and memos) and responsible party is only identified as the district or a sub-contractor. The applicant does not make a compelling case for its ability to scale up and influence change on a broader scale through its personnel and connections.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Each of the three participating districts has identified four or five district-specific goals to pursue which are presented in Table 5. Bremerton School District's five goals focus on increasing instructional quality in PreK-3, professional development, extended PreK learning, using assessment data to inform instruction, and outreach to foster families. It is not clear how some of the proposed goals are connected to specific actions. For example, it is not clear how a proposed outdoor classroom will support personalized learning or how personalized learning would be implemented in PreK-3 classrooms using strategies aligned with Common Core State Standards. Other than shared professional development opportunities, it is not clear how Bremerton would support vertical alignment and collaboration.

Everett Public Schools identifies four goals, but it is not clear how the proposed 14 project activities support each of the four goals. The district proposes summer institutes to increase teachers' knowledge base and capabilities, but the district does not identify the purpose or focus of the trainings. Similarly, a principal leadership project is proposed, but the district does not

provide information regarding the duration, intensity, or focus of these sessions. It is not clear if Teaching Strategies GOLD will only be implemented by Head Start providers or used by other community-based child care programs and state-funded or Title I funded PreK programs.

Lansing School District proposes four goals, but specific project activities are difficult to extract. Elements include hiring a coordinator, professional development, evaluation and data management support, but no elaboration is provided. While the applicant provides projected data as required in the tables, it is not clear how the proposed activities and projects would produce such ambitious improvements in standardized assessments in the grant funded period in reading and math proficiency for all students and specific student subgroups, as well as graduation rates and college enrollment rates. The applicant fails to connect district-wide projects and activities to their corresponding measure of improved student learning and outcomes.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Bremerton School District increased the graduation rate from 59.2% in 2005-06 to 87.2% in 2009-10 by implementing research-based instructional practices and increasing personalized learning options for high school students. One of its elementary schools received the Washington State Achievement Award for Closing the Achievement Gap in 2011 on state assessments, and a second elementary school increased math and reading proficiency for students at risk of school failure. Everett Public Schools increased the graduation rate from 78% in 2008 to 88% in 2011. Lansing School District does not have a clear record of success in improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, but the applicant notes that the prospects for success are exciting with an interim superintendent identified since March 2012. While 3rd and 4th grade math scores decline between 2008 and 2012, the district also struggled with stagnating graduation rates. The interim superintendent is leading a restructuring plan with the message "Bold Changes=Smarter Schools" that mandates restructuring of all schools in the district into grade span schools (e.g., PreK-3rd grade, 4th-6th grades, and 7th-12th grades) to facilitate transitions at more developmentally appropriate ages for students. The initiative was inspired by the participation of one of Lansing's low-achieving schools in the FirstSchool initiative, a seven-year project funded by the Kellogg Foundation.</p> <p>(b) Bremerton School District currently has no lowest-achieving or low-performing elementary schools, after successes with turn-around projects. Everett Public Schools reports that the district's lowest-performing schools are implementing AVID and PDCA, but no information is provided concerning the success of these reforms. Everett's achievement scores in reading have not shown consistent improvement, and no information is provided on math assessments. The district reports that one Title I elementary school has been recognized for academic achievement, but no further information is provided. Very little information is provided about Lansing's lowest achieving schools, other than a brief explanation of the FirstSchool initiative project funded by the Kellogg Foundation in which one school participated. This school posted ten percentage point increases in reading, math, writing, science and social studies in one year.</p> <p>(c) Student performance data is not readily available to parents and students on a regular, ongoing basis in Bremerton School District. Everett Public Schools utilizes eSchoolPlus, an online student data management system, for middle school and high school grades, and it will be implemented in the 2013-14 year for elementary schools. It is not clear how student performance data is accessible to students and parents with limited or no internet access. Lansing does not present a strong plan for sharing performance data, particularly with regard to access for educators and students.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant discusses the transparency and availability of personnel salaries in each participating district, but a high level of transparency is not evident. While the two Washington districts will provide individual or school-level personnel salaries to the public, each requires a Public Records Request. Parents and staff involved with school improvement planning processes are made aware of staffing plans and budgets. Salaries are reviewed and approved annually in public school board hearings. The Lansing School District does not provide salaries by school or department unless an employee makes above \$100,000, at which point state law mandates publication.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant makes a strong case that the two Washington districts are well situated to implement PreK-3rd grade projects and initiatives with the state's leadership and support , as evidenced by a number of initiatives since 2005, including funding of full-day kindergarten, creation and revision of early learning standards, and awarding of a federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant. The applicant provides two specific examples where the state has offered flexibility and autonomy to local districts to implement reforms and initiatives. The Lansing district does not demonstrate strong evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy, but it has recently reconfigured schools in the district according to grade bands with the support of and guidance from the state.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant provides more than 40 letters of support, many of these are "form letters" containing the exact wording with little indication of depth of involvement beyond general support. The applicant does not provide sufficient description of how stakeholders were involved in meaningful development of this proposal, but rather details existing structures or past participation of stakeholder groups in district initiatives. It is not clear how participating districts presented the draft plans, how often or when they met with partners, or how often and how executive summaries of the proposal were shared. Of particular concern is the lack of information regarding parent input and teacher participation in the proposal development. No information is provided concerning percentage of teachers involved.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant provides the required elements of a high quality plan in a table for each participating district, it is not clear how the goals for each district were identified based on an analysis of needs and gaps. The applicant does not provide information to detail how the analysis of needs and gaps was intentionally conducted in each participating district to inform development of the proposal. The applicant does not clearly delineate each district's current status in implementing personalized learning environments or provide a rationale for how each goal will address needs and gaps. Many of the proposed activities are global in nature, with no specific implementation timelines or details provided. For example, Everett Public Schools proposes to conduct on-going professional development for kindergarten teachers and principals in viewing writing as part of a developmental continuum, but it is not clear how this responds to identified gaps or needs related to personalized learning environments.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>While the applicant presents a table detailing its high quality plan to focus on learning, only two action steps can be extrapolated, including professional development delivered through three-day summer institutes and quarterly webinars and data collection of student performance data. The applicant does not make a compelling case that these will improve PreK-3 student learning or positively impact all students' learning. The applicant provides a synthesis of research on intentional teaching, balanced curriculum, and Common Core State Standards, but only proposes professional development in limited form (3 day summer institutes and quarterly webinars). Deliverables are expressed in broad, global terms, such as balanced, aligned student-centered curricula or child, classroom and school level data aggregated across subgroups. It is not clear how the applicant's proposed activities will be accomplished or how they support college- and career-ready standards or deep learning experiences. For example, the applicant proposes the activity of "Data provide feedback on change at the child and classroom level" without any discussion of how this would be accomplished by the responsible parties of the "school and district" or how it would support personalized learning or implementation of a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments . While the focus of this proposal is PreK-3, thus making it more difficult to link to college- and career-ready standards, the applicant fails to seize the opportunity to link proposed activities to create a high-quality plan to positively affect student learning. The only significant elements of the plan are limited professional development and data collection. The applicant does not address how its proposed plan would engage and empower all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner, to learn, be motivated, and regular engage in personalized learning as they track their own progress and growth. No mention is made of specific accommodations and high-quality strategies that would be implemented for high-need students.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents Table 26 as its high quality plan for developing a culture of collaborative inquiry, Table 27 as its high quality plan for supporting school principals and leaders, and Table 28 as its high quality plan for using knowledge and data to inform practice. Table 29 presents the applicant's high quality plan for using data to examine and support the learning of underserved students.</p> <p>In Table 26, it is not clear how the proposed activities of data collection related to classroom observations and child outcome data, along with 3 day summer institutes, quarterly webinars, and regular meetings, will support improved instruction and increase the districts' abilities to support student progress. While the applicant proposes developing a culture of collaborative inquiry and establishing a community of practice, it is not clear how often the proposed regular meetings at grade level and cross grade levels would occur or how the evaluation systems, classroom observations, and child outcomes data would be linked to collaborative inquiry. The applicant does not note the frequency of "regular meetings" and it is not clear how gathering child outcomes data twice a year would allow frequent measure of student progress. The applicant proposes data collection at the child, classroom, and school level throughout the year, but it is unclear how that data would be analyzed and used to inform student progress and the practice of educators.</p> <p>The applicant does not address how all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress. The only activities focused toward this goal are three-day summer institutes, quarterly webinars and regular school meetings. It is not clear how these processes would address knowledge of and implementation of tools, data and resources, including digital tools, or how such limited transmission of information would positively impact students' academic achievement.</p> <p>The applicant proposes supporting school principals and school leaders through three day summer institutes, quarterly webinars, and district professional development, but the content of these opportunities is not clearly identified, nor is information provided about how principals and school leaders will move from knowledge to implementation. Focus is on acquiring knowledge about child development, but the applicant does not identify outcomes other than establishment of a community of practice.</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly present a high quality plan to address educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps, or how it proposes to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a consortium steering committee, with two representatives from each LEA, including one elementary school principal and one central office staff. The consortium commits to provide school leadership teams in each LEA to the extent possible within each district's own policies and agreements. The applicant proposes quarterly meetings of the consortium steering committee. While the applicant provides assurances that it will comply with items (c), (d), and (e), it is scored in the low range because the applicant fails to provide a description or explanation of practices, policies, or rules that will facilitate their accomplishment.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Each participating districts details content, tools, and learning resources available, including a before-school program in Bremerton School District and a parent portal that is under construction. Classrooms in Everett Public Schools have a multimedia station and computers with Wi-Fi Internet access and web-based tools. The district also has a parent portal and allows parents to use the school library and computer lab. Lansing School District has a Parent Resource Center with computers with Internet access, employs two parent coordinators, has a cable television channel and provides a variety of</p>		

online parent learning tools.

The applicant details the technical support available in each participating district, including leadership teams, professional development opportunities, learning walks, instructional coaches, media technology support specialists, field technicians, helpdesk accessible by phone or email, and collaborative online platforms (e.g., Moodle and DocuShare).

Some of the technology-based systems available in the participating districts include Book Flix, IXL Math, ASCEND Math, Achieve 3000, eSchoolPlus by SunGard, Pinnacle Suite by GlobalScholar, Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment system, and EdLine.

The Washington districts use multiple interoperable data systems, including OSPI EDS system, Skyward, CEDARS, Data Director, and Parent Access, as well as the DIBELS/EASY CBM website. Lansing School District is in the process of developing a school dashboard and a district-level dashboard.

The applicant provides information about technology resources available, but does not directly indicate whether each district has the capability for parents and students to export data in an open data format and use that data in other electronic learning systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant contends that it has a continuous improvement process given its focus on data collection and analysis and shared professional development; however, the applicant fails to address how it will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of its investments. The focus of the application seems to be on internal communication structures between the schools, their districts, and between districts. The applicant does not clearly present the mechanisms and structures that would facilitate feedback and ongoing corrections and improvements related to key processes identified, such as collaboration, data-driven improvement, family engagement, and high-quality instruction and instructional coherence. The applicant fails to address how it plans to publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by the grant.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant articulates its commitment to summarize and share progress with national organizations as external stakeholders, but it does not address strategies to accomplish this. Additionally, while the applicant commits to share at community forums and other public forums, no specific strategies are proposed. It is not clear how parents and students would be informed other than through family-teacher meetings. While the applicant proposes deliverables of district-specific memos, presentations, and press releases, as well as presentations at national conferences, the frequency of such activities and the responsible party is not clear.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant only proposes one performance measure at the school or district level. It is not clear how the Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches will yield meaningful data for scale-up and sharing with other districts since it is designed to be a self-assessment tool rather than a performance measure. The applicant does not identify when the framework would be utilized or how it would demonstrate progress over time to assess progress at the school or district level. No information is provided concerning how the Framework data would be collected, from whom, or how it would be analyzed and parties responsible. No information is provided concerning who would be responsible for implementation of the CLASS and the Snapshot, the two proposed performance measures for all participating classrooms. While each measure is described, the applicant does not provide a clear rationale for selection of these two particular observation instruments. The applicant does not identify the frequency for administration of these two observation instruments</p>		

or describe how the resulting data would be reviewed and improved over time. The consortium will administer three cognitive measures (PPVT-4, OWLS, Woodcock-Johnson III) and three non-cognitive measures (Pencil Tapping Task, Learning Motivation Task, and Social Skills Improvement System) to a sample of PreK-3rd grade students. No information is provided to explain the rationale for selecting these measures, how sampling will be determined, how assessments will be administered and by whom, or how data will be aggregated, analyzed, and used. Each participating district is located in a state where teacher and principal evaluation systems are in development with adoption and implementation expected statewide in the 2013-14 academic year.

The applicant reports that it does not currently have data for PreK-2nd grade students disaggregated by subgroup populations. The applicant chose not to set target goals for 3rd grade reading and math, and proposed setting these during Year One of the grant. Similarly, since no baseline data were available when the grant was submitted for Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment administered to entering kindergarten students in Bremerton and Everett, the applicant proposes setting these in Year One of the grant after baseline data was gathered in October 2012. No subgroup data are provided and percentages of students meeting benchmarks are only provided for DIBELS (used only in Bremerton) and DRA (used in Everett and Lansing).

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes that a subcontractor will be identified to conduct an external evaluation. Only two classroom observations are proposed for participating classrooms and a random sample of only four children from each participating classroom will be assessed two times each year. The applicant identifies six research questions that will guide the evaluation, but the applicant does not indicate how often or when the external evaluation would occur. This important fact is necessary to determine if the applicant would obtain evaluative comments to allow continuous improvement based on information gleaned. It is not clear if sampling only 4 children would provide adequate indication of children's learning progress. It is also unclear if the children would be linked to a specific classroom teacher and principal. No further information is provided concerning how the outside evaluation would be conducted.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Bremerton School District will supplement grant funds with Title I and Title II funds, the state general fund, the Learning Assistance Program, and federal and state special education programs. Everett Public Schools proposes that funding for full-day kindergarten would be sustained by the state's plan to fully fund full-day kindergarten by 2017-18. Lansing School District will also utilize Title II Part A and state general funds, as well as Section 31a funds. Each of the three participating LEAs' budgets is proportional to the district's percentage of the total number of participating students in the Consortium. Indirect costs are figured for each district since each district will manage its own project-level work.

The applicant proposes five major projects that comprise its reform efforts, and a separate budget proposal and narrative is provided for each. The first three projects will be funded through inter-agency agreements while the last two projects will be contracts. The greatest cost on Project 1 is for curriculum materials and activity-based materials, as well as supplies for additional technology, an outside classroom, a STEM materials. A detailed list of curriculum materials or supplies is not provided, though this accounts for \$1,372,440 of requested funds. Similarly, for Project 2, additional information is needed regarding the requested \$410,975 for observation stations in 85 classrooms. Given the amount of funds requested for contracted services (\$1,650,000 for summer institutes and \$7,000,000 for outside evaluation), additional information should be provided to explain how the proposed amounts were derived.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for sustainability, but it proposes that sustainability is enhanced by focusing on building the knowledge and capacity of teachers, leaders, principals, and early childhood director, as well as establishing systems for coordinating and aligning the district's instruction with that of preschool partners.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes forging partnerships in each of its three participating LEAs. Bremerton partners with 17 community preschools serving 845 children from birth to age 5 through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) partnership. Joint professional development will be offered with the ECCE members. Everett Public Schools has formed an Early Leadership Team with early learning partners and is hosting Play and Learn groups through WaKIDS and Preschool Liaisons. Combined, Bremerton and Everett will serve 1,690 children from birth to school entry enrolled in community-based child care options in the proposed grant activities. Children from community-based childcare will participate in all performance-based measures in Bremerton and Everett, including DIBELS or DRA, as well as Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment at kindergarten entry. The applicant does not address any partnerships with the Lansing Schools other than the existing LEA-administered PreK programs. The applicant does not identify how the proposed performance measures indicate family and community supports results. It is not clear how data would inform the applicant's targeted use of resources for subgroups facing significant challenges or improve results over time. No information is provided concerning integration of other services with child care community providers. Staff capacity is only addressed from the stance of allowing non-LEA partners to participate in professional development offerings. Needs assessment of students, and engaging parents and families is not addressed. No projected benchmark percentages are provided for any measures except the DIBELS assessment used only in Bremerton.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The absolute priority is met. The applicant focuses on creating personalized learning environments by supporting teachers and principals in all elementary schools in 3 LEAs. The proposed project focuses on data collection and analysis to inform instruction, as well as improving student learning and effectiveness of educators. By focusing on providing high-quality learning experiences and personalized learning for all early learners in grades PreK-3, the applicant proposes to encourage a strong start for all learners, thereby preventing persistent achievement gaps.

Total	210	93
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0348WA-3 for Bremerton School District #100c

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has produced a strong vision of a multi-district, cross-state collaboration that focuses on early childhood through third grade, which is an important area (2 points). The participating districts, while predominantly white, have high amounts of poverty and one of them has appreciable student mobility. The applicant provides an exceptionally good review of the research (2 points) and demonstrates that they understand the issues that impact pre-K/3 education are complex and multifaceted (2 points).

The vision does not, however, demonstrate a compelling instructional argument. It is largely an organizational and programmatic view with little specific attention to the kinds of curricular (ex: numeracy), behavioral, or social issues that need to be addressed. The vision seems to focus on providing more resources (boost), which are naturally helpful and to provide some avenues for collaboration (leverage) and learning (evaluate) without strong evidence of specific types of cross-organizational learning and collaboration.

The applicant provides little to address specifically the four core assurances of this competition, including college- and career-ready standards and assessments, data systems to improve instruction, great teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest-achieving schools

Total =6/10

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

10

5

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a rational approach to implementation that preserves the local nature of the three districts. As discussed in the competitive preference priority section, the rationale presented seems to largely be based on what the three different districts are or have been doing. This reviewer finds this approach has merit, but also lacks coherence. The applicant does provide a list of the schools with relevant detail about the students, educators, and schools (2 points). The applicant also provides evidence of a high-level logic model (Figure 1 in section a.3) that does reflect the multileveled nature of the problem they seek to address (1 point).

The applicant does present a sequenced approach to implementation that follows their boost-leverage-evaluate model. This plan does include substantive research questions and a logical flow (2 points). At the same time, this reviewer's judgment is that the proposal would be stronger by having some of those research questions in the boost section addressed prior to the program so that the program would begin with a stronger chance of success. For example, the applicant proposes the questions of theory of change for each Prek-3 grade approach. The application would be much stronger if the applicant provided the theories guiding it in the application rather than deferring this until the project.

Total=5/10

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan that is grounded in their boost-leverage-evaluate model. This structure provides a guiding framework that can provide coherence that will be needed in a project undertaken by three different independent LEAs (2). The applicant also provides both the words and evidence of understanding the complex and systemic nature of the reforms they are proposing (2). However, the plan to scale the program from the target schools into a broader district-wide improvement is not well presented. Shared lessons as illustrated in Figure and embedded in the district-collaboration model is a good start, but there is little evidence in the proposal of a plan to lead to district-wide change (1).

Total=5/10

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does provide a set of goals that indicate increasing achievement and reduction of achievement gaps (2 points). Further, the section of the proposal discussing goals contains many important elements that might be discussed in more detail

elsewhere and integrated into the program's design. These include the high level of mobility in Lansing and the whole child perspective in Everett. There is much good in this proposal, including its emphasis on early intervention and the research-based connection to later success (2 points). However, the articulation of LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes suffers from some of the same challenge of a focus more on district staff and procedures than instructional design that affect other parts of the proposal. There are many good elements that individually could be beneficial for student outcomes, but they are packaged within three largely independent LEA structures and there is often a lack of coherence vertically from the elements to the outcomes and horizontally across the three different LEAs.

Total 4/10

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does provide four years of data that shows some growth over this time period. However, that growth is uneven rather than consistent and provided for only one of the participating LEAs (1 point). Two schools were provide as an example from two of the districts where the achievement gap seemed to close over three rather than four years. However, these results were not at the LEA level, but rather individual schools where there was concomitant school redesign occurring that could have also had other impacts on the school composition rather than evidence of a sustained effort at the LEA to increase achievement and reduce gaps. The application is further challenged by having few low performing or at risk schools. Looking across the other parts of the application there was little hard evidence beyond vision and an understanding of the complexity of education that the applicant LEAs had a track record of success. The applicant has provided data to students and other stakeholders (2 points) although through different means in the different districts.</p> <p>Total score = 3/15</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided some evidence of transparency in one of the three districtis (1 point). However, the applicant has not provided evidence of transparency across the three participating LEAs that would make detailed and public analysis of the costs of different personnel and categories easy for the public.</p> <p>Total score = 1/5</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>The applicant has provided evidence that the states in which the participating LEAs are located have a commitment to early childhood education and that the districts have good working relationships with the state education agencies (2 point). The applicant has not provided evidence of autonomy legal/regulatory freedom for the undertaking of innovative approaches. Further, one of the state's governors provided a letter of support indicating a likely partner in the state house (1 point), but there is little in the letter or other parts of the application that specifically describes the flexibility to provide personalized learning environments.</i></p> <p>Total =3/10</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>The applicant has provided strong descriptions of stakeholder engagement in the process of developing this application, including helping in its design (4 points). The letters of recommendation are excellent and show not only broad support, especially in the State of Washington, but that stakeholders in many cases sent letters that were unique, indicating that they</i></p>		

were less likely providing pro-forma support, but rather engaged (3 points). There was, however, less evidence of teacher union support in this proposal, which was a key provision for this requirement.

Total = 7/10

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a comprehensive set of goals for each LEA that they propose to be treated as analogous to the gaps. This list reflects work that is ongoing in the districts rather than defined (1 point). This reviewer finds this approach does not contain adequate detail in terms of where their data has indicated specific there are needs. The proposal argues in essence that additional funds will allow them to take what they are doing in some schools to other schools, but it has not provided evidence about what kinds of gaps exist in these other schools.

Total=1/5

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a strong vision of early childhood learning, which is an important foundation for future success (2 points). However, the application presents little evidence of a plan to personalize the learning for specific students and to engage key stakeholders, including parents, in the process of personalization. The response in this section of the application, while containing many educationally important concepts, is largely disconnected from the specific requirements of this part the solicitation. There is little that describes the connections between what the districts will undertake on their own and the career ready common core standards. There is little that describes the sequence of the instructional content and skill development as required by the solicitation, for example the mechanisms to provide training and support to students to ensure they will understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them to track their own learning. Rather, the proposal's reliance on professional learning communities and the infusion of additional resources are used in this section of the proposal rather than detail about instruction. Concepts such as self-regulation, intentionality, and balance are indeed important, especially in early childhood. However, the solicitations focus in specific instructional approaches has not been addressed.

Total = 2/20

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	6
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a reasonably well articulated plan of professional development and professional support activities that could lead to collaboration and common instructional leadership (2 points). The applicant has also presented a good review of the literature around instructional leadership and professional learning communities that lends credibility to their efforts (2 points). Further, the applicant has provided a good description of kinds of data that might be used in these efforts (2 points). What the applicant has not provided are many specifics of a plan for implementing *instructional strategies*. There is little detail about how they will include all participating students in rigorous courses of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. There is little specific detail regarding how the applicant's approach, which relies upon district-level resources and collaboration forums will accelerate individual student learning through understanding of his or her individual instructional needs and through personalization of *instructional services*.

Total=6/20

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While there are many strengths to a multi-districts consortium across two states, the challenges to infrastructure seem much higher also in this proposal to demonstrate that the infrastructure of the program can span these different jurisdictions in a coherent way. The applicant has provided evidence that they would implement a cross-district governance process with a steering committee and has sketched out a schedule of activities for them (3 points). However, the applicant has provided little detail that addresses the core elements in this part of the solicitation, including school schedules and staffing/organization decisions that might be necessary to support personalized learning. There is little detail on how students earn credits based on mastery or the opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of important skills.</p> <p>Total = 3/15</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some discussion of access supports across the different districts (2 points), including students with special needs (1 point). However, the applicant has provided little evidence of how the proposed project will provide all stakeholders with access, regardless of income, to the necessary content. Part of the challenge here is that the content itself is not clearly defined elsewhere in the proposal and part of the challenge is that the participating districts have differing circumstances and so providing a coherent support structure across them is both needed and not described. There is little detail on how the data systems would be integrated either within a district or across districts.</p> <p>Total score 3/10</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of a strong vision of continuous improvement grounded in multiple data sources that span both cognitive and non-cognitive factors (3 points). The focus on providing a safe space for practitioners to reflect upon their own and each others' successes that are presented in the plan provide evidence that the applicant is aware of some of the important cultural factors that will be required to continuously improve (2 points). The sequence of activities presented in the application shows the applicant understands some of the different ways that information can be used systemically to provide insights as well as a metric (2 points). Where the application is less successful in this area is in the details related to district investments and the program investments as well as providing some metrics for evaluating progress and identifying areas in need of improvement. For greater credit, a description of how the monitoring of performance measures would lead to potential changes in district performance is necessary.</p> <p>Total 7/15</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>The applicant has provided a very strong communications and engagement plan with details related to the goals and activities related to this program (3 points), including describing different forms of communication and frequencies that are integrated into a touchpoints logic model. This plan coupled with the very strong presentation of support letters (2 points) makes this one the better parts of this application. These elements combined present a case for this reviewer that the applicant has been active and successful in engaging their stakeholders and will likely be successful in this area going forward.</i></p> <p>Total 5/5</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a strong presentation of performance measures with both cognitive and non-cognitive elements as</p>		

required in the solicitation (4). These measures are described in some detail and they include the CLASS scoring system, which is especially appropriate for the Pre-K3 age range. In a number of parts of this section of the proposal, information is missing (see table 36) and/or not yet available deducting from full credit.

Total=4/5

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

The applicant has presented a strong evaluation plan that details research questions that directly relate to the areas that can affect success, including district/school/classroom level practices. The evaluation element of this proposal is seen in two areas. It is in the required section of the proposal and it is also integral to the program design (3 points). While the evaluation section may not contain all the detail that a reviewer might like, because ongoing evaluation is embedded within the program's design, this reviewer finds the applicant has presented a strong case for its ability to produce meaningful information about the effectiveness of the program and an ability to adjust accordingly.

Total=3/5

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does provide a comprehensive budget within the application that details personnel and other costs (4 points). Since the proposal is largely based on increasing district staff there is little in the way of technological infrastructure as might support personalized learning. The proposal further does not provide a strong rationale for the particular funding strategy and the source of additional funds are not described in detail. The proposal is weak in terms of long-term sustainability of personalized learning.

Total=4/10

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some discussion of the sustainability of the project in terms of program residuals (administrative structures and procedures (2)). The plan does appear to have the support of state leaders, especially in Washington State where two of the three districts are located, although the support letters do not commit funds or mention potential additional funds. Additional support from ongoing savings or programmatic investments were not detailed.

Total 4/10.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided evidence of public private partnerships for both of the Washington state districts (4 points). They have not provided the same evidence for Lansing. They have provided annual ambitious, yet achievable goals for those two districts (2 points) and evidence of partnerships within them.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
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Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant barely meets this this priority. The proposal is largely targeted at district level resources and procedures for reflection and collaboration. There is little description of how the project will allow different students to receive different instruction and/or supports based on their individual needs. The application does describe the general process of early childhood education very well. But, the required description of how this process varies by student and can be differentially delivered is not provided.</p>		
Total	210	82