



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0346CA-1 for California Education Partners

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides very thorough description of existing practices in both LEA's and demonstrates links between existing practice and reforms proposed in this application. While the two partner LEA's vary considerably in terms of size and student population, the vision is still very unified and cohesive, illustrating an approach that is very realistic. For example, Clovis is a large district serving primarily middle-class families and Sanger is 1/4 the size of Clovis serving primarily low-income families with a significant number of ELL. However, the vision completely reflects the needs of <u>both</u> districts which is what makes it a unified vision.</p> <p>The applicant has done a good job of illustrating how their vision builds on current work with Common Core Standards and high school Math reform. To illustrate, this proposal acknowledges that simply purchasing technology cannot "fix" achievement gaps, and clearly outlines a vision for how technology will be incorporated with changes in the teaching and learning environment. Exhaustive rationale for the use of blended learning is provided, as well as a sound theory of change. The need for support in Middle school math is well-documented in this proposal, supported with historical examples of achievement.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is proposing implementation in all schools containing gr.4-8 classrooms so there is no "selection process", which is an approach that will support high-quality implementation. For example, if all elem/middle schools in a district have the same technology and resources, central office personnel can provide more consistent guidance and support. Further, when it is a district-wide initiative, there is typically more support and more buy-in at all levels.</p> <p>The selection of grades 4-8 (as opposed to just middle school gr.6-8) will also support high-quality implementation because work in grades 4-5 will lay the groundwork for success in middle school grades. If the applicant had just proposed the middle school grades, it would be far more difficult to overcome deficits students often have when they leave 5th grade. Applicant has given thoughtful consideration to all of these factors and has described an approach that will maximize the buy-in and support necessary for success.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant outlines an approach that will translate into improved infrastructure throughout the LEA. (e.g. increase in technologically savvy personnel, wireless access and software) The evidence for how the approach can be scaled up is less convincing. For example, the proposal lacks specificity in how this project will be scaled up to include additional grade levels and subject areas. Insufficient examples of how project activities will be adapted to include K-3 and 9-12 students and teachers, or adapted to fit other subject areas, particularly when all of the software included in this project focuses on Math. The increased expertise among teachers in grades 4-8 (e.g. use of personalized lesson plans and group projects) can be utilized to support teachers in other grade levels even without the scale up of technology, and middle school Math teachers could also share their expertise with middle school teachers in other subject areas. In summary, applicant provides evidence that it can scale up <u>some</u> parts of this approach (e.g. improved teacher practice) but not all. (i.e. access to digital resources cannot be scaled up without considerable addit'l funding)</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

- This proposal demonstrates achievable goals, but not particularly ambitious goals for all grade levels. For example, once schools reach the 90% proficient threshold they simply need to maintain that rate and not improve over the remaining years of the grant. (e.g. grades 4&5 Clovis). Further, proposal only specifies a goal of 1.25 times the historical growth but it is unclear where the figure comes from and whether "historical" only includes the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years provided in the table. For example, if the "historical growth rate" is zero (e.g. grade 4 Sanger and grades 8&9 Clovis) then "1.25 times zero" is still zero growth.
- It does demonstrate how it will increase equity, given that this is a district-wide initiative and all schools will have access to the same resources and support regardless of prior performance or student demographics.
- There is no mention of State ESEA targets for the LEA and proposal is lacking an explanation of how "historical growth rate" is established.
- There is substantial variability between grade levels in the magnitude of the Math goals. Examples of inconsistent goals include (1) ambitious goals for Sanger and less ambitious for Clovis; (2) goal of 14%-17% growth for grade 6&7 in both districts, but less than 5% growth in grades 4, 8, & 9 in Clovis.
- Applicant provides a clear explanation as to why this particular project is not likely to have substantial effect on graduation rates and college enrollment rates given the timeline of the project and grade levels of participating students. Specifically, it will be several years before the students benefiting from this project graduate high school, and applicant acknowledges changes are not likely to occur in grad rates during the grant period.
- Goals for decreasing achievement gaps throughout LEA are achievable, and in most cases, more ambitious than the goals for overall growth. For example, the goals for decreasing achievement gap between SWD and non-SWD is ambitious in both districts and the goal for decreasing gap between ED and non-ED students in Sanger is ambitious.

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the proposal provides a more convincing track record for Sanger than Clovis in recent years, there is moderate evidence of success from 2008 to 2012. Proposal provides convincing evidence that Sanger has advanced student learning, whereas Clovis evidence demonstrates that they're higher-performing but not necessarily that learning has advanced in the last 4 years. To illustrate, the overall % change in Math for Clovis was positive, however it was much lower than the state average or Sanger's. Because this proposal only includes the percentage point change from 2008 to 2012, it is not possible to observe year-to-year change.</li> <li>• Further, the narrative is inconsistent with graphs regarding Math achievement in Clovis. Proposal states a "5% increase among white students in CUSD...in Math" for 2011/12, but graph shows, from 2008-2012, only a 2% point change in proficiency level indicating that previous years' change likely included a decrease in proficiency. Additionally, Sanger SWD students increased 3 percentage points in Math from 08 to 12, however previous table shows SWD students in Sanger increased 5 percentage points (from 44% to 49%) from 2011 to 2012, again indicating previous years likely included a decrease.</li> <li>• In Sanger, the percentage point change in Math for white students only differs by + or - 1 from other ethnic subgroups. This does not provide convincing evidence of gaps closing in Math.</li> <li>• Since graphs only provide cumulative change, and no details about change per year <u>or</u> average change per year, it is unclear whether these changes constitute a convincing track record of success.</li> <li>• Reforms in Sanger are supported with extensive examples of growth and description of programs used to facilitate this improvement.</li> <li>• Very thorough, detailed explanation of how widespread their data is in both districts, through their existing parent portal and learning management systems. The proposal describes focused strategies for dissemination and use of data by all stakeholder groups, particularly parents and students.</li> <li>• Overall, the proposal provides evidence supporting some of the selection criteria but not all. Specifically, the proposal has achieved reforms in lower performing schools (i.e. mainly Sanger) and has shown growth in some grade level's achievement and has closed gaps in some areas (e.g. SWD). Though the track record of success appears stronger for Sanger than for Clovis in recent years, both districts have strong support for providing student performance data to all stakeholders in ways that inform and improve instruction.</li> </ul>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, this proposal indicates an extremely high level of transparency and both districts provide a wealth of information to their constituents regarding not only student performance, but expenditures and board policies and procedures. For example, there is comprehensive evidence of exemplary practice in the provision of information to the public related to LEA process and practices through their Human Resource websites, the local newspaper, and school report cards posted to their websites. Examples are also provided of how LEA information is readily accessible in multiple languages (e.g. Spanish) and easily obtained through the LEA websites for those with internet access which will greatly increase the number of stakeholders who review this information.

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

Applicant's proposal is aligned with state guidelines in several areas. Specifically, recommendations from the Technology Task Force, Personalized Learning resolution and 'Data Access' Senate Bill guidelines provide the support and autonomy necessary to accomplish goals of this proposal. In particular, the fact that the Senate passed a personalized learning resolution back in 2004 indicates an environment conducive to the implementation of the learning model proposed here. Most states have guidelines about technology and data access so those aspects are sufficient to support this proposal. The resolution is what sets this state context apart from others in that, it indicates strong, long-standing support from the state which will facilitate the success of this program. Since the approach doesn't seem to conflict with any state initiatives, there will be far less chance of interference from state mandates which can sometimes inhibit progress of grant-funded goals or programs.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal partially meets the selection criteria. For example, while letters of support are provided from all stakeholder groups, there is no clear evidence that students and families were "engaged in the development" of this proposal as stated in the NIA. Yet, both districts provide examples of how principals' and teachers' input was sought and thoughtfully included in the development of this proposal. In addition, proposal demonstrates sufficient evidence of support and ongoing input from collective bargaining unit in Sanger.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- Overall, applicant provides a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of current status as well as things that are still needed in order to effectively and equitably improve student learning in a personalized environment. Implementation work plan provides strong support for identified needs with sufficient specificity regarding timelines and deliverables. There are a few inconsistencies however.
- Specifically, inconsistent information is provided with regard to existing practice and PD needs. Specifically, both districts already provide small group and/or differentiated instruction to struggling students, use computer-based assessment (e.g. ALEKS) and teachers already "rotate students in groups", yet these are things listed as PD 'needs'.
- Proposal states community will be given information about "new instructional model" but several other places in the proposal present this project as an expansion of existing practice so it's not entirely "new".
- The proposed timeline for identifying external partners for technical support and learning resources is only five months long which is not very realistic given the vast number of vendors that exist in these areas (e.g. hardware, software, etc)

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Overall, proposal includes an ambitious move toward differentiating the learning environment to the extent that teachers and digital resources will essentially be reaching out to students, which has potential to create an engaging and supportive environment to maximize student growth

- o The online content with the ability to create a variety of cultural and extracurricular contexts, specific to student interests, is a reasonable way to engage students and deepen their learning experiences.
- o The station rotation model, for example, provides ample opportunities for students to develop teamwork and communication skills which are essential if students are to become career-ready.
- o Simply linking the digital content to the Common Core Standards in Math is not particularly ambitious since most states are moving in this direction. However, proposal includes sound examples of how teachers will be able to provide more guidance to students in measuring their progress toward mastery of the CCS.
- C(1)(b)
- While the station rotation model certainly provides ample opportunities to individualize the learning sequence, and includes sufficient evidence of high quality, highly adaptable digital content with ongoing regular feedback, applicant does not provide convincing evidence that high-need students will receive a level of support beyond what they're already receiving without this funding. There is also insufficient explanation for how students will be able to change their learning behaviors to fit this model, which includes, if not requires, a great deal of independence and self-direction on the part of the students. While applicant mentions an expectation that students will "work independently or interdependently", it is very vague as to how these skills will be built in students over time especially given the variability in implementation frequency. (e.g. Implementation work plan specifies teacher use of this rotation model "daily or weekly") For example, students in 2 of the 3 stations (small group and online) will be peer or self-led and the teacher's attention will be devoted to the "teacher-led" station which does not seem feasible given the applicant's reference to "large classes of students" and the level of supervision/facilitation students require.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Generally speaking, the proposal provides a very thorough and achievable plan for training teachers and school leaders. All the essential topics are addressed in their plan (e.g. infrastructure, functionality of digital resources, interpretation of student data)
  - o Specifically, the PD topics include areas, such as classroom management and tech support, that will facilitate buy-in among teachers.
  - o Additionally, teachers are provided training in the development of units/lessons that incorporate all 3 of the station rotations, which is essential for teachers accustomed to whole-group instruction
- It is a well-designed schedule that demonstrates sufficient consideration of potential barriers to implementation.
  - o The proposed training provides ample support for teachers' implementation efforts (e.g. summer institute along with monthly follow-up meetings and on-site coaching/tech support) which will minimize frustration.
  - o PLC activities exemplify best practice, providing strong evidence of support for successful implementation. Specifically, watching videos of colleagues' instruction, reviewing/sharing resources regularly, and structured discussion of strengths and weaknesses in this model are all ways the schools will be able to ensure fidelity of implementation of blended learning.
  - o Application lacks evidence of how teacher turnover will be addressed and how Math teachers new to the districts in years 2-4 will be brought up to speed on this rotation model.
- However, the role of the school and district leaders is vague and inadequate and does not clearly specify how the teacher evaluation system can support implementation.
  - o Specifically, the application says this blended learning model will be aligned to the teacher evaluation system "where possible".
  - o The proposal also lacks specificity in how the district will evaluate principals' effectiveness in leading the implementation of this model. District Leadership Teams visit schools "at least once per year" to observe/discuss implementation, which is insufficient to ensure fidelity of implementation.
  - o No clear evidence of how teachers and principals will be held accountable for implementation of this model in all Math classrooms. In a district the size of Clovis, it isn't realistic to suggest buy-in will be high enough to ensure implementation without some level of accountability and oversight from the leadership teams.
  - o Proposal is lacking evidence of how this project can increase the number of highly effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools since implementation is fairly uniform across all school types.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the application provides strong evidence of existing practices that facilitate flexibility and autonomy, particularly when it comes to budgets and staffing. These existing practices are supported by innovative examples of new practices put in place through this project that will facilitate personalized learning. Applicant has provided a thorough and comprehensive plan for maintaining LEA policies consistent with the goals of this project. However, while the culture of site-based management in these districts does provide flexibility and autonomy, this can be somewhat inconsistent with a district-led, more "top-down" implementation of this blended learning model and it is unclear how applicant will address this change in culture. Further, the applicant provides vague details regarding how they will address wide variability in implementation structure and depth (attributable to site-based management), which can create difficulties for district leadership team put in place to support use of this model throughout the districts in all Math classrooms.

Examples of strengths include:

\* This project builds on existing practices in these schools where students can progress through content as they master it (e.g. flexible course placement and online coursework) and have new opportunities to demonstrate mastery (e.g. formative assessments including performance tasks) both of which are essential when implementing a station rotation model requiring more independence and self-directed learning. The digital content introduced through this project is designed to be highly adaptable and accessible to all students (e.g. multiple languages) which will allow teachers to personalize learning.

\* The proposal justifies different levels of staffing in each partner district given the wide variation in size. Two extra f/t positions in the Clovis district office, for example, will provide the additional support required in a larger district that has 37 participating schools, as opposed to 15 participating schools in Sanger

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

10

4

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant provides comprehensive overview of the resources provided in school through this project, but less information is provided about how the resources will be accessed by students/parents out of school. There is limited evidence of accessibility for the low income, non English speaking parents.

- a. Student:computer ratios of 2:1 or 3:1 in school are reasonable.
- b. Engaging parents is dependent on internet access since surveys are given online, and access to data is only through an online parent portal, though application shares one strategy to increase access by partnering with a local corporation to provide laptops and internet access to needy families.

(b)The proposed infrastructure to provide support to students and parents is sufficient ; however, the stakeholder group utilizing this project the most will be the educators and the infrastructure to provide support to schools is inadequate. The applicant provides vague descriptions of how districts will allow people to export data or use interoperable data systems.

Specifically, the coach role and tech support role are staffed at a 5:1 ratio in Sanger (e.g. 5 schools per 1 coach), but in Clovis they are staff at a 7.4:1 ratio in addition to the fact that Clovis schools are larger than Sanger schools. It is unrealistic to suggest a district can introduce new hardware and software to every Math class in 37 schools and have only one tech support person troubleshooting problems in over 7 schools with an average of 8-10 teachers per school utilizing this model. This is likely to increase frustration and eventually decrease buy-in over the first year of the grant.

It is unclear whether the one teacher leader on-site, who is supposed to help with trouble shooting, will be released from other instructional responsibilities so she can provide 'just-in-time' assistance with these tasks that are likely to be quite prevalent during the first year.

The portion of the narrative that discusses portability of data and interoperable systems is lacking specificity. Most of the text simply re-states what is in the NIA or explains processes that sound as though the LEA's plan to maintain their current practice in these areas. (e.g. continued use of parent portal and Illuminate) While their student information systems are already fairly interoperable, an obscure description of data portability doesn't address how this criteria will be met.

Further, the timeline of Feb-May 2013 to purchase, install or update wireless access points in numerous classrooms across 52 schools is ambitious but likely not achievable. In addition, having hundreds of teacher and student laptops delivered, formatted and integrated into district inventory all within April of 2013 is unrealistic as well.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
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(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>E(1) – This section lacks specific examples of how applicant will use formative data to facilitate a continuous process of improvement. The NIA requires a "rigorous continuous improvement process" and this proposal includes primarily informal means for collecting formative data. The proposal describes "continuous improvement" related to teacher practice and implementation rather than explaining "continuous improvement" in terms of measuring progress toward stated goals, as specified in the NIA. While the implementation structure for this project does allow ample opportunity to solicit feedback from stakeholders, the proposal does not outline a convincing plan for how corrective feedback will be collected with sufficient examples of how it will be utilized for improvement purposes. A project of this magnitude, that includes a vast amount of new technology and instructional strategies will need to be closely monitored with frequent opportunities for mid-course corrections before frustration builds among the staff that can impede implementation.</p> <p>* The only part that provides solid evidence of continuous improvement is the annual survey where the districts solicit more formal, actionable feedback from teachers related to "challenges that need to be addressed".</p> <p>* The rest of the narrative is fairly vague and simply states districts will monitor/update the project based on input/feedback, and then re-states the implementation plans described elsewhere in the proposal.</p> <p>* While a later section mentions a 2-day annual review in June it is not clear how this will relate to the continuous improvement process.</p> <p>* Additional inconsistencies include "hold a monthly town hall meeting...to provide...opportunities to visit model classrooms" and discrepancies in the timeline for soliciting feedback, including "twice-yearly surveys" in one section, then "annual surveys" in another and "monthly meetings" or "quarterly updates" in another.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a thorough plan for communication with stakeholders, includes complete evidence of ongoing means of communication throughout this grant and proposal reflects thoughtful consideration of all of the possible engagement strategies that will be necessary.</p> <p>For example, applicant provides an exhaustive table of examples where information will be disseminated to external stakeholder groups through newsletters, webcasts, parent meetings, etc. In addition, applicant has planned frequent, regular structured opportunities to communicate with internal stakeholder groups which will increase the engagement considerably. Stakeholder groups, particularly internal stakeholder groups, will feel they have a voice during implementation and an opportunity to receive guidance about project status.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant should be able to adequately measure project success using the measures specified in this table because they chose a comprehensive list of measures that include both academic and social-emotional indicators relevant to the Blended Learning Model and are developmentally appropriate measures for grades 4-8. The selected measures will allow them to effectively measure outcomes beyond just achievement, since this blended learning model proposed is also designed to increase students' 21st century skills like problem-solving and collaboration. In most cases, there is a sound rationale provided for the inclusion of each measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The description reflects applicant's thoughtful consideration of how implementation will deepen over time. Specifically, moving "to a more granular measure" of teacher and student use in later years of the grant, reallocating technical support staff based on number of problems, and including higher targets in subsequent years will provide timely and formative information on whether they're progressing toward their goals.</li> <li>• Targets are achievable though not all are ambitious. Specifically, a target of only 60% of teachers (increasing to 75% by the end of the grant) who are satisfied with the professional learning provided and the monthly collaborative meetings does not indicate a highly successful implementation. In addition, a target of only 60% of students (increasing to 70% by the end of Year 4) who are satisfied with their learning environment or excited about their learning does not indicate high levels of student engagement.</li> </ul>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This evaluation plan is average, though not outstanding. A thorough description of the annual review process is provided however there is no specificity about the role evaluation will play throughout the year. Granted, the extensive in-depth annual review is an essential component of this project and will provide extremely valuable information. But by the time they have the first annual review that contains district-wide implementation and performance data, it will be June of 2014, ~ 1/3 of the way through the grant. However, the applicant does indicate the evaluator will "meet periodically" with the district team but this portion lacks specifics about frequency and what deliverables or actionable information would result from those evaluative meetings.

The application presents sound strategies for productive use of resources, and determining ways to decrease costs (e.g. hardware discounts, train-the-trainer model, parent volunteers for provision of after school digital content to students).

The evaluation questions specified in E(4)1 'Review Performance' don't seem to contain the same depth of consideration for how the project will evolve over time. Put more simply, the evaluation questions for annual review should be asking not only how things went during the past year, but how they've improved historically and over the life of the grant. (e.g. Is the blended learning model being...used by teachers? " should include "Has use increased over previous year? or Is there variability in teacher use within and between schools?)

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>F1 – Budget is reasonable and in most areas, should be sufficient to support a technology-based project of this magnitude. However a few (relatively minor) gaps or inconsistencies exist. The budget is seperated into "Equipment" for the PLP and "Professional Development"</p> <p><b>EQUIPMENT -</b></p> <p>For example, the required personnel added through this project will receive adequate salaries given their level of responsibility. The cost per device is reasonable and an estimate of 10% replacement rate per year is realistic for teachers and students.</p> <p>The need for a removable keyboard is not explained at all. Providing only one \$50 power source (per classroom) that will have to charge as many as 12-15 laptops is not likely to be sufficient. In addition, there is no budget for increased utility bills. When you start plugging in student laptops, (996 in Sanger and 4165 in Clovis) and add numerous wireless access points, you're bound to be have electric bills that are considerably higher than what they are used to. Narrative does not mention the electrical infrastructure of the school buildings but presumably they are modern enough to accommodate the additional power sources required.</p> <p><b>Prof'IDevel –</b></p> <p>A few vague areas, but overall budget is well-planned. To be specific, the budget for substitute teachers lacks a solid rationale explaining where the total figure came from. Further, the cost for PD consultants to train teachers seems a bit inflated. (\$175/teacher/day for a weeklong summer institute)</p> <p>The contractual project implementation support in Clovis (\$20k per school) is vague. A solid rationale for the support is provided however it is lacking evidence about how they came up with the figure of \$20K per school.</p> <p>When it comes to the hiring of software vendors and an external evaluator, it seems like a partnership between neighboring districts could yield some sort of cost savings. For example, both utilize Illuminate as a student information system and are hiring a vendor to support the integration with their respective LMS/SIS . Yet, it is \$300K for each district, even though one district is substantially larger than the other. Similar inconsistency with the software installation cost. It is \$100K per district to install and address technical issues. Though Clovis serves quadruple the number of schools and students that Sanger does and will likely have far more technical issues that need to be addressed. The evaluation cost is the same for both district but the evaluation in Clovis will require more than double the number of site visits/focus groups/interviews than Sanger.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>F2 – Post-grant budget seems very realistic. Given this project includes primarily up-front costs in terms of training and</p>		

equipment purchases, the sustainability costs for training are relatively low compared to the overall startup costs. Proposal specifies 6 sources of state funds and 5 sources of federal funds which provides convincing evidence that money will be available to sustain this rotation learning model beyond the life of the grant. Yet, they won't be able to scale-up the project to additional grade levels or subject areas without additional funds. The projected budget for years 5-7 is very detailed and consideration was clearly given to most all aspects of sustainability. However, the applicant only projects technology replacements "due to damage or loss" but there is no mention of what they will do when the system operating capacity of the laptops becomes incompatible with advances in the software or web-based resources that are available. This is like to occur by Year 5-7.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Though these two districts have applied as a consortium, they addressed the competitive pref priority separately, partnering with different community organizations which seems a bit disjointed given that both districts will be implementing the same changes in gr.4-8 instruction. Nonetheless, both districts outline strong partnerships with community organizations that are social service providers and/or integrated student service providers. Limited evidence that the organizations with which they're partnering can handle the increased capacity projected in this proposal (Sanger) or will impact a significant number of high-need students (Clovis).

For example, in Sanger the partner organizations serve 2500 families which is an increase over 1500 families in previous years. Application states this increase was due to renovations made possible through a private grant. However, proposal suggests they'll be able to serve 4000 families in the next 5 years which is a bit unrealistic given that proposal states their computer lab only has 5 computers. This entire proposal is predicated on internet access at home so parents/students can access the digital resources and dashboard to keep up with students' progress.

In Clovis, the partnership is with an after-school program that serves approximately 2% of the students in the district. (roughly 81 students in each of 11 schools, mainly in grades K-6) It's possible (though not explicitly stated) that many of these students will not even be participating students (e.g. K-3 students) and will therefore not have any digital resources from the blended learning model that can be incorporated into the after-school tutoring that is already in place.

The structure of the partnerships is very strong and clearly defined, and has the potential to contribute quite a bit to facilitating parent/school communication necessary through this grant. Though, the proposal does not contain convincing evidence that these partnerships will add a considerable benefit (e.g. internet access, and home access to digital resources) to the high-need students and families served by this proposal beyond the services they have already been getting.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This proposal is almost entirely focused on personalizing the learning environment. An exhaustive list of strategies to individualize education are provided, along with all the necessary supports to enable these districts to realize all of the potential benefits of this program. The strategies and resources outlined are very closely aligned to teaching and learning, designed to elicit great improvements in student achievement. The approach outlined in this proposal is attempting to provide a proactive response to ultimately increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities.

Total	210	153
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

While this proposal provides a solid rationale for why teachers need assistance with developing lessons and assessments aligned to the common core, the solution proposed here is not particularly innovative. It does, however, provide a clear solution that can be easily replicated in schools across the nation, mainly because proposal includes opening the Launchpad and making it freely available to "all educators across the U.S."

The lack of innovation is evidenced by their proposed use of an online portal and webinars which will most certainly duplicate efforts by their state, neighboring states, private vendors, etc. and not provide a resource that uniquely benefits this consortium. The specific population served by this optional budget supplement is primarily teachers in all grade levels and subject areas and is not focused on gr.4-8 or Math as specified throughout this proposal. The strength is that this approach to developing resources for the Common Core includes a group of 8 districts (part of CORE) that have grown accustomed to working together in the last two years and this pre-existing relationship may facilitate, if not increase the likelihood of, teachers' use of these resources and instructional strategies developed with this supplement. Overall, the proposed online "Launchpad" for the CCSS could potentially be a very useful tool to improve teacher capacity and includes a realistic budget, but seems akin to "reinventing the wheel".

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	4
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

#2 - CORE District Collaboration Plan

The successful implementation of this supplemental project depends largely on whether other (somewhat unrelated) RTTT-D applications are funded. This plan includes 8 districts that are members of CORE and have submitted 3 separate applications within these 8 districts, so if one or two of the three applications doesn't get funded and one does, it significantly weakens the contribution this collaboration plan can make to students/teachers in this area. Further, since these 8 districts are already members of this parent organization, there would already be systems in place for collaboration it seems.

While the supplemental application provides a solid rationale outlining needs and potential benefits of cross-district collaboration, and also provides a high-quality plan for how RTT-D can benefit each other with ideas and strategies (e.g. data proof points), successful implementation hinges on how many of them get funded. The budget is more than adequate to support this collaborative effort, however if only 2 of 3 or 1 of 3 applications were funded among the CORE district, than the budget becomes quite inflated.



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0346CA-2 for California Education Partners

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did a great job articulating their vision for creating student-centered classroom environments. It was evidenced in their basic tenets for student support, "Know the Student," "Customize the Content," and use of "Variety of Delivery Methods." Understanding each and every student's needs and customizing educational contents using a variety of delivery

methods are indispensable processes to make the classroom environments more student centered and deepen student learning. One of the key elements of the vision, the teacher driven, blended learning, classroom rotation model is a reasonable choice to realize the vision, given that blended learning provides adaptable digital contents based on each student's needs and flexible instructional groupings.

The applicant proposed that they will focus specifically on middle grade (4-8) mathematics. The rationale for choosing the subject area and the grade level is logical and reasonable. History of failure in core academic subjects in earlier school years is a strong indicator of not graduating high-school on-time. Since students in the applicant's consortium are making weak progress in Mathematics in grades 4-8, focusing their reform efforts on middle grade math is a good decision.

It is clear that the applicant has addressed the four core educational assurance areas in their on-going reform efforts.

First, they have adopted college and career ready standards by adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS were developed as college and career ready standards by key education experts throughout the nation. However, it is not clear how the proposed blended learning, powered by digital contents will be more effective in meeting the CCSS math standards than other approaches. It is understandable that blended learning can provide more personalized and collaborative learning environments using digital contents in the classroom. However, it lacks evidence that those aspects of blended learning will deepen student learning that will eventually lead to improved math achievement in the CCSS.

Second, they have already developed a data system that can demonstrate individual student and teacher profiles. The applicant argues that the proposed learning model will enhance the current data system by making students' data available on a daily basis. Instant and interactive data processing is one of the greatest merits of computer technology. Therefore, it is a convincing argument that the proposed model can build on the existing data system.

Third, the applicant described how their current reform efforts have supported and developed teachers and school leaders. Their teacher and principal evaluation system takes into account student achievement results and professional development activities focused on student skill development in core subject areas. These practices can be applied within the proposed project with an emphasis on mathematics.

Lastly, the consortium reports that they have made substantial improvement in their lowest achieving schools using Professional Learning Community for collaboration, Response To Intervention, and an alternative governance board oversight. These interventions are believed to be continued in the proposed project and will be necessary for its effective implementation.

Overall, the applicant described a comprehensive vision that builds on their already existing reform efforts to address the four education assurance areas. Also, their vision is clearly centered around personalized student support. However, it was not very clear in this section why blended learning is the best choice to deepen student learning and improve math achievement under the new common core state standards.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant adhered well to the application instructions.

First, the selection criteria for the schools and the grades align with the goal of the proposed project which is to improve middle grades math using the blended learning approach. Accordingly, all elementary, middle and intermediate schools that serve students in grades 4-8 were selected to participate in the proposed project. The list of all participating schools, the type of the school and the LEA each school belongs to were provided in a table format.

Second, the applicant met the eligibility criteria of 40% or more of students who are from low-income families. Although the percentages range from 0 to 95 across schools, the average percentage of the students from low-income families is 42% across the schools.

Lastly, the table (A)(2)(c) provided comprehensive information, including the number and the percentage of the participating students and teachers and the number and the percentage of high needs students. This information was tabulated for each school and for the consortium as a whole. The data provided was based on the most recent school data (SY 2011-2012). However, the data was not organized in the same order for the tables (A)(2)(b) and (A)(2)(c).

These reasons grant a high point on this section of the application.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a high-quality plan describing how the proposed project will be scaled up to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. The multi-year plan described in table (A)(3) includes the goal, timeline, deliverables and responsible parties for each proposed activity. Provided information is clear and specific enough to be deemed as implementable.

However, it was vague how each and every proposed activity supports the vision of the reform, which was described as "creating student-centered classroom environments." The applicant proposed that they will eventually roll out the blended learning classroom rotation model into other subject areas and grades, including k-3 and high school. The evidence that supports the blended learning is a strong method to personalize and differentiate instruction across subject areas and grades, and leads to improved student achievement, was clearly lacking. Therefore, the proposed activities are insufficient to support the overall project.

The theory of change (TOC) was inadequate to support the reform and change process. Theory of changes usually contains an overarching vision, activities that support the vision and the short-term and long-term outcomes. However, the described TOC was more of an assortment of the components of the proposed project and activities within each component (grades 4-8 math, district-wide culture and infrastructure, expansion to other subjects and grades, and etc.). Arguably, the bottom row provides some short-term outcomes, but it was not clear how those outcomes (e.g., technology use, math proficiency, college-and career ready) will impact personalized, student centered learning.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, this section is scored 5 on the 0-10 scale.

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

The applicant addressed all the requirements for this section as specified in the notice. Annual targets during the project period include performance on summative assessment in core subject area of Math and English by student sub groups and each district, achievement gaps between student sub groups, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.

The goals maybe achievable through the proposed project, but they cannot be determined as ambitious. The reasons are:

1. Although the methodology for determining growth seems reasonable, not much changes in achievement are expected as the result of the proposed project. For example, Clovis county's math, proficient and above rate for the eighth grade is even lower than the pre- blended learning, classroom rotation period. This data does not convince that the proposed intervention will bring out powerful enough outcomes that are worth the investment.
2. The applicant set rather stagnant goals for graduation and college-enrollment rates. Although the focus of the proposed project is on grades 4-8. They did propose that the proposed intervention will roll out into other grades and subjects. The smaller growth in these areas make it difficult to conclude that proposed project will be effectively scaled up and bring powerful reform.
3. Clovis county ninth grade math annual goals for percent proficient and above show almost no changes over time. Although the proposed intervention focuses on 4-8 grades math, in the pervious section, the applicant stated that interventions in these grades are critical to prepare students for algebra I according to the Common Core standards. The proposed goals contradict this earlier statement.

Therefore, this section scores 5 on the 0-10 scale.

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:

A clear *district-wide* track record of success in the past four years (2008-2012) was provided by the applicant. Although they did not have the persistently lowest-achieving schools or low-performing schools in the last four years, it was clear from their record that the consortium has been building on their success in turning around schools that had entered in the Program Improvement (PI) status previously. The consortium presented evidence of this effort using the changes in achievement gaps in Math and English by different student subgroups and by each district. Most subgroups showed higher achievement than the

district average. They also made improvement in high school graduation. College enrollment data was not found in this section.

Some of the data charts were not easily recognizable. The ones that display student subgroups were not discernable.

Although the consortium presently does not have the lowest or low-performing schools, their reform efforts in the last four years are impressive. Development of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) for teacher support and the Alternate Governance Board (AGB) for leadership support are some of the supporting evidence.

The narrative provided sufficient information regarding how they make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. Student performance data is available to educators on the district, and school level using state assessment data, benchmark and unit test data. The consortium ensures that parents receive and understand student performance data on the state assessments. The reports are sent to parents in English and Spanish in paper format. Parents also can monitor their children's performance on websites. Each district created a parents portal, which include tutorials in multiple languages, so parents can access student data, including grades, attendance, and even assignments. It is commendable that the consortium not only makes the student data available to parents, but also makes an ongoing effort to inform parents how to access the data. They inform parents about the parent portal using multiple venues, such as parent handbooks, bulletins, and listserv.

For these reasons, this section scores a high point of 12 on the 0-15 point scale.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described that the school-level expenditures of state and local funds are readily available through multiple websites. However, it was not clear from the narrative whether those websites are open to the public or only accessible by school related personnel. The consortium addressed all four categories of the school-level expenditures, including;

- (a) actual personnel salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff
- (b) instructional staff only
- (c) teacher only, and
- (d) non-personnel expenditures.

Web links where the above information can be found were listed. However, it lacked specifics on what kind of data (e.g., incentive pay and/or bonuses, supplementary pay, employee benefits, professional development, instructional materials/supplies, contracted services, and etc.) can be found for each categories.

For these reasons this section scores 3 on the 0-5 scale.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

It seems that the applying consortium is well situated in several state-wide legislative measures and initiatives that are conducive to the successful implementation of the proposed project.

The state's focus on educational technology and math and science education provides a bedrock for the implementation of blended learning in middle grade math.

Also, the senate bill that allows school districts the authority to adopt common core state standards faster and choose instructional materials can facilitate the implementation of the proposed project.

Local autonomy in use of funding can allow the consortium to focus their resources for the targeted goals.

Professional development and training opportunities that focus on mathematics and high quality teaching sounds beneficial for the implementation of the project with fidelity.

Teacher and principal evaluations that takes into account student growth can provide accountability for the project.

These components demonstrate evidence of successful conditions for the success of the proposed project.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It was evident from the narrative that the application was supported by some key stakeholders, such as the state department of education, district superintendents, teachers and principals of the participating schools. It seems that these parties were actively engaged in the development of the proposal through weekly (Sanger county) and bi-weekly meetings (Clovis county).

The applicant obtained a letter of agreement and the signature from the teacher's union representative and included in the application. The applicant described that the teachers union provided input regarding:

- (1) current district challenges and areas of need
- (2) how to allocate and prioritize RTTD funding, and
- (3) visions for reformed teacher evaluation systems.

For the district, which does not have a teacher's union, the applicant obtained a letter of support and the signature from the Executive Body of the Faculty Senate. The applicant described the role of the president of this group and assured that the organization represents 100% of the teachers of the district. Therefore, the president of the Executive Body of the Faculty Senate is acceptable as an evidence of teachers' support. However, in the narrative, the information was lacking whether the local board has recognized the representative.

What was missing in the narrative and the appendices was the evidence of support from other key stakeholders, such as parents, and student organizations. It would have been more helpful if the applicant provided information about how students and parents were informed of this competition and how they were engaged in the formation of the application.

For above reasons, a medium score is given to this section.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did a nice job articulating where the gaps exist between the current state and the upcoming challenges. Gaps and needs were identified in three areas:

- (1) transition to the Common Core State Standards- Math (CCSS-M)
- (2) technology infrastructure, and
- (3) professional development.

In this section, the applicant made a good case on why blended learning will be useful to facilitate the transition to the CCSS-M. The applicant reported that in the CCSS-M, being able to use computer software is an expectation because it enables students to utilize multiple ways of looking at a problem. This argument makes their need for technology convincing. The applicant was specific about their technology needs. Computers, installation of additional wi-fi access point with sufficient bandwidth, third party partners to select and design digital curriculum and assessments are reasonable requests. The topics for professional development are relevant to blended learning classroom rotations model. Those topics included classroom management, personalized instruction, transition to CCSS-M, and use of digital tools.

Analysis of needs and gaps- Implementation work plan is a high quality plan that specifies the goals, activities, timeline, deliverable and the responsible parties. The language in the table were clear and action based.

There was a grammatical error in the narrative (" The goal is to give the students *to* opportunity to see the math happen.....")

For above reasons, this section scores a high point.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a thoughtful approach to engage and empower all learners in an age-appropriate manner. It was convincing that the blended learning, classroom rotation model will address all the sub components of the selection criteria. The applicant addressed the selection criteria point by point.

To help students understand the importance of their learning, the applicant planned that all students will develop their own individualized instructional plan for math with support from their math teacher and parents. This is an excellent practice to engage students in planning their own learning. This plan also included the roles of teachers and parents.

To help students identify and pursue learning goals that are linked to college-and careers ready standards and requirements, the applicant stated that their consortium districts now have a set of clear college and career ready learning requirements. However, it was not clear how they are going to inform students of the requirements. Although tools, such as student dashboard and regular check-ins with students were mentioned, it was not clear whether these tools will actually contain the college and career ready learning requirements so students can gauge their progress towards them.

The applicant used appropriate, concrete examples to persuade the readers that the proposed intervention will engage students in deep learning experiences. The advantages of computer based instruction and assessments in relation to engaging students in deep learning were evident.

The applicant argued that the nature of the proposed intervention will facilitate collaborative group activities in the classroom and this will provide students opportunities to explore new perspectives, cultures and contexts. This is a reasonable argument given the diverse student population in their districts.

The applicant described how each component of the proposed project will develop student skills, such as goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. Again, using concrete examples, the applicant made a credible argument that small group activities, digital contents, and teacher-led instruction provide richer opportunities to develop those skills. The consortium also acknowledges that the blended learning, classroom rotation model is not the only means to achieve these goals. They understand that teacher skills and creativity are essential to successful implementation of the intervention components.

The applying consortium ensured that students will have access to personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development. Teachers' effective grouping strategies, proficiency with differentiated instruction, and adaptive online curricular were addressed to ensure personalized sequence of instruction. Also, what parents can do at home to understand and support child's learning was addressed. The factors identified are critical and comprehensive to ensure this requirement.

A variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments were addressed comprehensively. The teacher led component, small group based component, and online component of the proposed intervention were described with each component's expected short-term outcomes (e.g. more intimate environment that is conducive to individualized attention to students, accessibility of instruction beyond the school settings, etc.).

To ensure high quality content, aligned with college and career ready standards, the applicant described their selection criteria for digital content, and flexibility in choosing content, including traditional textbooks. They have identified priorities to ensure high quality content (develop, adopt, and adapt lesson plans). Having set criteria and priorities make the plan credible.

The availability of frequently updated student data is one of the biggest advantages of the digital learning model. Development of the formative assessment modules that can support the proposed intervention sounds like a reasonable and important step.

With the availability of frequent student progress data, the applicant reported that personalized learning recommendations will be available to best support students to be college and career ready. The support includes academic intervention classes, extended-day programs ,and summer classes. Parents roles in supporting students were also described.

Specialized instructional software was intended for accommodations and high quality strategies for high need students. The rationale for this plan was reasonable (accessibility to multiple modes of learning, flexibility of instructional pacing).

Lastly, their plan for student training to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources was clever and unique. Students will be taught on how to interpret their own data and student level technical assistance team will be created in each classroom. For parents, orientation and training session was described.

Again, the applicant presented a highly detailed and comprehensive approach to student learning. The implementation plan included goals, activities, a timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties in clear, actionable words. Therefore, the applicant deserves a high point on this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented multiple ways and methods to address the criteria, (C)(2)(a)(i). Plans were described with specific timelines for the pre and post-award periods. Building teacher buy-ins and sharing the vision are the foundation of any successful training and team activities. The consortium understands this and has plans to engage teachers and teacher

leaders in the planning of their own training and professional development activities.

Professional development will address topics that are central to creating personalized learning environments. Those topics include: developing and monitoring individualized instructional plans for math, effective classroom management, creating and leading small groups, individual interventions, involving parents, digital contents and assessments, and creating communities of practice among teachers.

To ensure that teachers and school leaders will be trained and informed of these contents, they have multiple ways of managing teacher development on the principal level, teacher level, site level and virtually.

These are all very thoughtful plans to ensure that teachers will have the capacity to support personalized learning.

(C)(2)(a)(ii) The applicant ensured that teachers will have capacity to adapt content and instructions according to individual students needs. The focus on developing lesson plans that are adaptable to different students needs are important and commendable. In order to do this, the consortium has plans for teacher training on the use of digital and non-digital materials, lesson plan sharing, and peer lesson observations.

(C)(2)(a)(iii) To ensure that teachers will have capacity to frequently measure student progress toward college and career ready standards, the applicant proposed professional development and on-going coaching in using student assessment data from a variety of sources. Also, the applicant ensured that the proposed learning approach will make more frequent assessments of student performance available using the online tools. These are reasonable proposals to meet this selection criteria.

(C)(2)(a)(iv) The consortium assured that student achievement will be a factor in their new teacher and principal evaluation system. Moreover, they stated the willingness to modify their evaluation system so it can measure the implementation of the proposed project. As another way of improving the evaluation system, the applicant shared the plan for principals training to make them stronger instructional leaders.

(C)(2)(b)(i) The applicant stated that teachers will have access to actionable information that will help them improve their instruction through peer classroom observations, principal training to provide actionable feedback, integration of digital content and small group work, and so forth. Although the peer classroom observations, and principal training are convincing arguments to support this requirement, it was not clear what aspects of the integration of digital content and small group work support this particular criteria.

(C)(2)(b)(ii) The consortium promised that both digital and non-digital materials will be utilized to ensure high quality learning resources. Also, a wealth of lesson plans and other resources will be available for teachers through the professional learning communities. For high quality assessments, a new Math assessment module has been developed and the pilot study will inform their plan for high quality assessment in the context of the proposed project. These proposals provide sound evidence to meet this selection criteria.

(C)(2)(b)(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources were not clear from this part of the narrative. Although the rotation classroom structure, actionable student data, and teacher training on classroom management may be the tool to serve this purpose, they cannot be determined as the processes. It was vague what purpose those tools serve in the processes. Approaches to provide feedback about the effectiveness of resources were supported by the description of the ongoing PLC process, external evaluator, and the mixed method evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the project.

(C)(2)(c)(i) Multiple sources were presented to ensure that the consortium will have information and training that helps schools assess and take steps to improve educator effectiveness and school culture. Those sources included student performance data on summative and formative assessments, teacher evaluation data, school leader training to recognize best practices and provide constructive teacher feedback, classroom observations, and professional learning communities that emphasize strong collaboration and teamwork. These are strong evidences to meet the selection criteria.

Various teacher and principal professional development activities were reiterated for the section, (C)(2)(c)(ii) to ensure that the consortium has training, systems, and practices in place to continuously improve student performance and close achievement gaps. Those include principal training on best instructional practices, high priority on supporting high needs students, and community of practice though the professional learning community.

(C)(2)(d) The consortium's plan to secure, increase and develop highly qualified teachers and principals is by implementing the proposed intervention. The consortium believes that the the new learning model will enable teachers to increase their interactions with individual students and personalize learning. This learning model will lower teacher-turnover and attract more highly qualified teachers to the districts. Training for principal development was described as well. This is an acceptable argument but not sufficient. Although this plan had the components of a high-quality plan, including the deliverables, timeline, goal, activities, and the responsible parties, it is too generic in regards to hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

Overall, the applicant provided detailed supporting evidence for the most part of this selection criteria. Therefore, this section

deserves a high range score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The organization of the consortium governance structure was clearly presented. It was easy to understand how the consortium, and the districts are partnering to provide direct support to participating schools. Positions that are critical to the implementation of the proposed project were described with the roles and responsibilities on the consortium, district, and school levels.</p> <p>(b) The applicant described with convincing details that schools in each school district have autonomy and flexibility over school level budgets, school schedules and calendars, personnel decisions, and roles and responsibilities of instructional and non-instructional staff.</p> <p>(c) The consortium proposed multiple ways to provide students the opportunities to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not based on "seat time." Those examples include 1-2 day enrichment lessons for students who master standards, small group instruction for students who are not progressing, availability of digital modules for advanced students, alternative pathways to make up classes, and opportunities to take fully online classes to earn credit.</p> <p>(d) It was evident that the districts in the applying consortium allow students the opportunities to demonstrate a mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple ways. Schools have make-up policies, and many examples were listed that the school will be encouraged to utilize to provide students multiple opportunities. Those include oral assessment, project-based assessments, summative and formative assessments. Their newly developed assessment module was also mentioned to support the repertoire of the multiple opportunities.</p> <p>(e) It was reasonably argued that the proposed learning model will provide learning resources that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. It is understandable that the nature of the digital contents make this possible. The applicant describes the features of the digital content that support the adaptability (e.g.. audio, video support, hyperlinks, translation, and etc). However, an insufficient explanation was provided on how instructional aids, special and general education teachers are expected to collaborate in this instructional context to support students with disabilities.</p> <p>The applicant addressed the selection criteria point by point. The applicant also provided a high quality plan with goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties. However, the goals are too generic; they should be strongly tied to each sub criteria. Therefore, a medium score is given to this section.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant did a nice job articulating how the fund will be used to ensure that key stakeholders will have access to learning resources at school and non-school locations. The consortium was specific about what is needed on school site to ensure this criteria (e.g. computers, WiFi connections, sufficient bandwidth, etc.). They ensured that if the necessary equipment is in place, students will have access to their learning materials at school and outside schools. Although they currently have parent portals to provide parents access to their child's educational data, the applicant understands that many parents do not have access to the Internet at home. They proposed a discounted internet access program for low-income families.</p> <p>(b) The applicant proposed multiple ways to ensure that key stakeholder will have appropriate levels of technical support. The consortium conducted a needs assessment to gather input from teachers on the kinds of support they need. That is a good starting point to provide teachers what they need. It was clear that the consortium was trying to find cost-effective ways to support teachers and students. One example is the identification and use of teacher leader for each site. They also identified ways to support students and parents. Training for students and parents to utilize the parent portal and technical assistance were proposed using various on and offline methods, such as town-hall meetings, back-to school nights, newsletters, and teacher-parent conferences.</p> <p>(c) Although the specifics were lacking, the applicant promised that they will use information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. It is a reasonable expectation that the specifics will be determined when they work with the software vendors.</p>		

(d) The consortium is already utilizing interoperable data systems. They have separate data systems for student information and human resources data. Although the consortium reported that their districts use student assessment reporting system as instructional information systems, it was not clear whether this system contains sufficient information regarding teaching practices.

The consortium provides a high-quality plan that contained goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties. Again, however, it was not clear which goals were tied to particular sub categories of this section criteria. For all the above reasons, this section scores 7 on the 0-10 scale.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a rigorous improvement plan. Regular feedback on progress is scheduled on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. District teams and the participating schools will engage in these meetings to share best practices and discuss their progress towards the project goals. The role and responsibilities of the district teams and the participating schools have been clearly described in this section and the previous section. The stakeholders are jointly responsible for monitoring, measuring and publicly sharing information on the quality of the progress they made. In the Implementation Work Plan table, the applicant described how they are going to make the progress information available publicly for parents, students, and other education stakeholders. Examples include town hall meetings, emails, newsletters, school board and PTA meetings, social media and etc. However, this information was not visible in the narrative.</p> <p>The consortium identified four priority areas for the improvement plans. They are content and curriculum, technology, professional learning, and stakeholder engagement. The four areas are very relevant to the goals of the project (blended learning, classroom rotation model in middle grade math to create personalized classroom environments).</p> <p>For these reasons, this section deserves a high range score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders were described in the narrative in the subsequent Implementation Work Plan table. The table provided enough details on who will be engaged, how they will be engaged and how often. For this reason, this section scores a high range score.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided all the required performance measures for the targeted student population by each participating district. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup whose teacher and principal are highly effective</li> <li>(2) the number and percentage of participating student, by subgroup whose teacher and principal are effective</li> <li>(3) The number and percentage of participating student, by subgroup who are on track to college and career ready,</li> <li>(4) applicant proposed academic indicator</li> <li>(5) applicant proposed health or social-emotional leading indicator.</li> </ol> <p>The applicant proposed a total of 14 indicators for each school district. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant described a target for each performance measure, Its rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p> <p>However, the proposed performance measures cannot be determined as comprehensive.</p>		

First, the targets were not measurable. With no baseline and annual goals provided, it was difficult to assess whether the measure is ambitious yet achievable.

Second, no student subgroups were mentioned for the measure (3) - Average number of days of attendance per student per year

Because of these two major weaknesses, the section scored a low point.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As noted in previous sections, the applicant seems have a comprehensive evaluation plan. Funded activities will be evaluated by three criteria, implementation fidelity, performance and outcomes, and stakeholder and community support. These categories provide comprehensive measures to evaluate professional development activities, cost efficiency, allocation of resources, modifications of school schedules and structure, and partnership with the community. Therefore, this section deserves a high score.

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

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified all funding sources for the proposed project including the RTTD fund, and other funds that will support the implementation of the proposal. Other funds include district General Funds from the state revenues, state funds for professional development and technology, federal funding streams, such as Title I and Title II, and state after-school program funding. Although not quantified, the applicant was specific about how these other funds will support the project (e.g., existing technology infrastructure, exiting PLC structures and schedules, PD resources, etc.).

The applicant did identify the funds for one-time investments (e.g., technology purchases and installation, classroom power sources, implementation consultation), ongoing operational cost (e.g., personnel, equipment replacements), and other costs (e.g., technology replacements, professional development).

The budget table and the narrative provided detailed detailed information to be considered as reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. For example, the budget narrative listed personnel who will be hired for the project, annual salary for each position, fringe benefits, and the job descriptions. Equipment costs were broken down by the number of devices needed and the cost for each device. Other parts of the budget narrative was developed in the similar fashion with cost description and the cost assumption provided. Budget was created for each school district and for each district had two budgets, Personalized Learning via the blended learning, classroom rotation model, and Professional Development for teachers.

Overall, budget tables and justifications were developed in a clear manner and the narrative met all the requirement for this selection criteria. Therefore, this section scores a high point.

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

10

9

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a high quality plan to sustain the project's goals after the term of the grant. It seemed that the consortium was specific about how to reallocate the resources where to find the funds to support the project after the funding period. The consortium estimated 2.6 million per year to sustain the project goal after the funding period. They identified potential funding sources for the three years after the grant term. Those sources include various state and federal funds, and local foundations. The sustainability plan included a budget for the three years after the grant term for each school district.

Considerations for the sustainability starts from the beginning of the implementation period. It is a clever and reasonable plan to invest a large portion of the RTTD fund on training teachers and principals since they will continue implementing and lead the blended learning environments. In the end of the section, the applicant provided a high quality plan that contains goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties. The information in this plan is consistent with the section narrative and clear and actionable. For these reasons, the applicant score a high point on this section.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Both districts within the applying consortium already has strong partnerships with community, non-profit organizations that serve high need families and children including students from low-income families, English learners, and students with disabilities. The missions of the partnering organizations were clearly described and are believed to be very relevant to the goals of this competitive priority:

To augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family support to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students.

Six to nine performance measures were identified for each district. Performance measures were presented with the baseline and annual goals during the grant period. Although Sanger County's performance measures included a student math achievement, it was not clear which grade(s) the measure was targeting. Also except the math performance measure, all the other performance measures were related to parent outcomes. No social-emotional or behavioral measures for students were found. Clovis county's performance measures were more comprehensive, including student's academic, behavioral, perception measures, as well as parent outcome.

Both districts failed to address the criteria (3)(a).

Both districts proposed that data from multiple sources with be shared and analyzed with their partners (parent survey, focus group, student data, etc.) to identify the needs of the students and target resources to address the needs. They also stated that the partnership will address the project goals in personalized math education and supporting parents and will be scaled up to support other grades subjects. This will be achieved though ongoing regular meetings between partners and evaluations. These are reasonable strategies to meet selection criteria (3)(b)-(d).

The applicant's proposal that the partnerships will integrate the project goal in the current services the partners are providing for high needs students is considered feasible based on the nature of the partners' current work (supporting high needs students academically and socially).

Both applicants successfully addressed the criteria (5). Most of the sub-criteria can be achieved by ongoing regular collaboration/communication between the partners and resource sharing. These were the major point both districts made.

The applicant devoted many pages to describe both district's plans to meet the competitive priority. However, both districts failed to address (3)(a) and some sections included insufficient information. For example, Sanger county proposed surveys to improve results over time (2)(d). However, surveys can identify needs, but it was not clear what their partners would do with the survey results. Another example was Clovis county's response to (4). It reads, "Please see above." However, it was not clear which part of the previous section was relevant to this particular criteria.

For these reasons, a low mid range score is given to this section.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

It is clear that the applicant has addressed the four core educational assurance areas in their on-going reform efforts.

First, they have adopted college and career ready standards by adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS was developed as college and career ready standards by key education experts throughout the nation.

Second, they have already developed a data system that can demonstrate individual student and teacher profiles. The applicant argues that the proposed learning model will enhance the current data system by making students' data available on a daily basis. Instant and interactive data processing is one of the greatest merits of computer technology. Therefore, it is a

convincing argument that the proposed model can build on the existing data system.

Third, The consortium understands that teacher development is crucial for this learning model to be successful and proposed to plan to invest on professional development and creating professional community of practice.

Lastly, the consortium reports that they have made substantial improvement in their lowest achieving schools using PLC for collaboration, RTI, and an alternative governance board oversight. These interventions are believed to be continued in the proposed project and will be necessary for its effective implementation.

It was evident in all parts of the application that the applicant is committed to creating personalized learning environments for all students, and improve learning and teaching. Clearly, the applicant is striving for innovative way to provide personalized learning environments for students using blended learning, classroom rotation model. Although there was not enough evidence in the application that this learning model will deepen student learning and accelerate achievement in the college and career standards, the applicant articulated the potential of the proposed learning model.

Total	210	156
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented two proposals for additional funding. One was to create an online "Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Teacher Capacity Launchpad" portal. Another was to build the infrastructure for collaboration between the "CORE districts." Both projects aim to develop products that can be replicated in schools across the nation.

The former project focuses on supporting teachers to successfully implement the new CCSS. The project proposed to develop a portal that contains contents on assessments, instructional strategies, and curriculum resources. Undoubtedly, these three topic areas are critical knowledge and skill areas for teachers to provide personalized learning experiences to students. However, the applicant inadequately articulated how this project will impact student learning.

A high-quality plan was proposed for the CCSS Teacher Launchpad project. The timeline for developing three versions of the launchpad was presented with deliverables and responsible persons.

The budget narrative was also clear and comprehensive, including personnel descriptions, cost assumption, contractual costs and their purposes. The requested funding was under \$2 million. A typo was found in the budget narrative - "\$1,955,649 million."

The latter project, the "CORE District Collaboration Plan" had sound rationale directly related to student achievement and personalized learning environments. The goal of the project is to leverage current structures and systems for collaboration and knowledge sharing to (1) meet the common challenges that districts face in implementing personalized learning, and (2) extend the work to other districts. As the "Launchpad" project, this project is not considered as to adversely affect the implementation of the Middle Grade Math project, if not funded.

The implementation plan was a high-quality plan. Activities, timeline, responsible persons, and deliverables were evident in the narrative.

The requested budget was under \$2 million. Budget justification was clear and adequate. The budget was itemized containing enough details on personnel descriptions, salaries, and rationale for planned activities, and the cost.

The latter project is considered a higher quality proposal. However, overall this section displays a quality that deserves a high range score.

## Race to the Top - District



## Technical Review Form

Application #0346CA-3 for California Education Partners

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The CORE Middle Grades Math Initiative clearly identifies a comprehensive and coherent reform vision as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of a Teacher driven blended learning instructional model using technology as a means of enhancing the learning environment. I believe this is an excellent practice in that the blended model provides for varied learning styles which is in my opinion clearly aligned with the establishment of a quality personal learning environment</li> <li>The development of a personal learning environment based on identified individual student academic needs interests and learning styles</li> <li>There are clearly defined growth targets for student achievement for identified student population as well as targets for increasing proficiency for all grades. When one looks at benchmarks the applicant states Performance on summary assessments "We set our targets on the assumption that our instructional model will Accelerate grades 4=8 student growth in math by 25%....For CUSD we target increasing math proficiency for all grades by 7%.....For SUSD we target to increase math proficiency for all students by 11% and for targeted grades by 15%</li> <li>Comprehensive vision of personalization based on three core tenets: Know the student, Customize the content, Use a variety of delivery methods</li> </ul> <p>In summary the applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision identified by the establishment of Personal Learning Environment through the implementation of a blended instructional model.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has identified the schools (and Districts) that will be the targeted focus of this reform effort as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clovis Unified School District and Sanger Unified School District</li> <li>41% of students are from economically disadvantaged families</li> <li>60% of students are part of minority groups</li> <li>Participating student groups are identified as those students in grades 4-8 and as expanded in future years both in the Elementary and High School</li> </ul> <p>The applicant identifies specifically targeted student populations however the applicant's plan inclusive of comprehensive professional development, increase access to instructional technology and the use of a blended instructional model is evidence of systemic-wide educational reform.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 1 the plan will impact 39% of all students and 25% of teachers in these districts</li> <li>84% off schools in these districts will participate in this initiative</li> <li>Funding this Core Middle Grades Math Initiative blended learning model beyond the RTTT-D funding will occur by expanding to supplementary non-Math areas and then expanding to grades K-3 and High School</li> </ul> <p>One area of concern is the statement... "In years 3 and 4 we will begin planning for the initiative's long-term sustainability and planning for scale up to other grade levels and subject areas". This statement leaves in question the sustainability of this</p>		

program. The applicant does not address if this planning is related to student outcomes or financial in nature. There no concrete vision described for continued sustainability.

Additionally this Applicant relies on a neighboring District's (Fresno) application being approved. The issue of concern here is there is no mention of the applicant's ability to implement their plan as submitted if the neighboring application is not approved. My assumption is that this is a stand alone plan however that is an open question.

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

The applicant has identified a consistent vision that is likely to result in improved student learning and equity as evidenced by:

- The goal to accelerate growth performance rates in Math for students in grades 4-8 by 25% (Using the California Standards Test)
- For Clovis USD the goal is to increase Math proficiency for all grades by 7%
- For Sanger USD the goal is to increase Math proficiency for targeted grades by 15% and in all grades by 11%
- Because of the focus of this project (Grade 4-8) graduation rates were not addressed other than to "Build in annual growth based on historical rates" projected out to 2017

The fact that the applicant is looking to infuse instructional technology in a more equitable manner, Increase the level and focus of continuous professional development reorganize the use of instructional time through the implementation of the blended learning environment and then use the above targets of student academic achievement as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of this reform is evidence of a solid coherent and comprehensive plan inclusive of accountability measures listed above.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Both Districts have identified a record of success over the past four years as evidenced by:

- 2004 Sanger USD had seven schools identified as Program Improvement (PI) schools. By 2008-09 all seven of those schools moved out of that status
- Three of those schools emerged as California Distinguished Schools
- Two other formerly PI schools have been recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools

In Clovis USD:

- CUSD ranks sixth in achievement by Latino and African-American students among the 146 largest districts in California
- Two schools were awarded California's Department of Education's Title I Academic Achievement

Clearly these schools have demonstrated a track record of success as identified by the Blue Ribbon designation (DOE) as well as State of California's designation of Title I Academic Achievement.

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

This applicant has demonstrated a High level of transparency as evidenced by:

- All information related to Salaries is available online at each district's website
- All expenditure information is available through the Civil Rights Data Collection Website Ed. Gov

These schools have demonstrated through the use of both print media as well as website technology a high level of transparency.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This Applicant has demonstrated the development of conditions and sufficient autonomy State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State recognition, Senate Resolution SR(36), of personalized Learning and recognizing it as a distinct "Innovative and distinguished learning model and promising choice in California public education.</li> <li>• March of 2012 State Superintendent established an Education Technology Task Force to identify goals for the use of Technology for teaching and administration, as well as obstacles that stand in the way. This Task Force identified seven specific strategies for implementation and use of Educational Technology in the learning environment.</li> </ul> <p>This applicant has demonstrated a high level of autonomy through the development and implementation of the CORE (California Office to Reform Education) initiative. They are self-directed and the level of collaboration between the Faculty Senate and the District clearly demonstrates the commitment necessary to plan and implement educational reform.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant demonstrated meaningful stakeholder engagement as demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All necessary documentation related to stakeholders agreements were included in this application including governmental agencies, community agencies and Parent/Teacher organizations and Associations.</li> </ul> <p>The consortium developed teams of all stakeholders using existing organizational structures such as Personal Learning Communities and Administrative structure and communication structure when developing this application. Clearly as evidenced by the ability to use existing structures, the applicant has an established a systemic culture collaboration.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant provided and analysis of needs and gaps as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both District's have already implement Professional Learning Communities and Response To Intervention as a means of establishing Personalized learning environments for students based on specific identified learning needs.</li> <li>• There are clearly defined gaps in the availability of instructional technology. the range of student to computer ratio ranges from 1.5 to 1 to 22:1 depending on the school.</li> <li>• Mobile computer labs are outdated</li> <li>• resources support is needed for digital curriculum resources, licensing and professional development</li> </ul> <p>Again the applicant clearly has in place structure that provides analysis of student needs and gaps in the District's ability in meeting those needs. As for the applicant's current status in implementing personal learning environments, the focus on the development of Professional Learning Communities and Response To Intervention implementation are evidence of this commitment.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The CORE Middle Grades Math Initiative encourages the development of a personalized learning environment as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of a blended learning model based on three core tenets: Know the Student, Variety of Delivery Methods, Customized Content</li> <li>• Implementation of a teacher-driven portfolio approach to on the three core tenets (Clearly identified in the application)</li> <li>• Students will develop individual learning plans (6th grade) online. Access to these plans will be available to parents</li> </ul>		

through the development of a parent portal. These plans will be the basis for discussing student performance with students and parents.

- Through the transition to the CCSS-M School, Teachers, Students and Parents have a clear set of college and Career ready learning standards which provide the basis for connecting student learning to these outcomes.
- Through the establishment of small group learning communities supports, Teachers will be better able to support students. Additionally through the development of "Dashboards" both students and teachers can monitor student progress.

There is no doubt as outlined above, the development of individual learning plans, Core Standards and the focus of College and Career readiness that the applicant has a comprehensive plan that engages and empowers all learners.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates development of a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment as evidenced by:

- Four primary areas of focus defined as:

Equip teachers to drive their changing role in the classroom

Enable teachers to integrate instructional technology, digital content and assessments into classroom instruction

Build Principals' capacity to support implementation of blended learning/classroom rotation model at their schools

Create communities of practice among teachers and principals implementing a blended learning model

- The development of Professional Learning Communities
- The implementation of Summer Learning Institutes for Teachers and Administrators focusing on the development and effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities, Data Analysis and implementation strategies for the blended learning model.

The applicant has defined current structure, current reform efforts, previous successes and a high level commitment to educational reform (CORE) as evidence of a systemic commitment to continuous improvement.

This issue with this section is the timeline related to implementation is very ambitious but not realistic. As a practical matter effective training of the number of staff will take more than the time allotted

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate learning as evidenced by:

- The establishment of a Project Governance and Ownership team (Model included) inclusive of:

District level implementation teams. These teams will be responsible for the management of the vision, implementation of the CORE program, provide communication between the staff and district, manage the implementation of resources and monitor program outcomes

Teacher support teams

Teacher support structure at each school

- Personalized Learning/Technology Implementation Coaches
- Autonomy over use of time a resource allocation by site-based teams

The infrastructure as outlined above is evidence of the commitment of the applicant to develop and support and personalized learning environment for students. The applicant has clearly defined the process and structure that will provide the support necessary for consistent high quality implementation.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated the existence of infrastructure that supports personalized learning as evidenced by:

- The two schools districts currently have in place infrastructure and policies which allow access to information via the school website. Additionally, the districts have limited infrastructure and availability of computers providing some student access to technology.
- This plan clearly identifies the need for equitable access for all students to required technology inclusive of WiFi. There is a clear plan for both building the infrastructure and providing students the devices necessary to ensure equity of access to electronic resources and online learning.
- All stakeholders having access to student work as a means of providing feedback and monitoring continual student progress monitoring.

The applicant identified the current infrastructure strengths and provided comprehensive plans to address gaps such as WiFi access, equitable device access and classroom instructional materials.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a clear high-quality approach to continuously improve this plan as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of a CORE consortium governance structure</li> <li>• The establishment of a continuous improvement plan in the areas of content and curriculum, technology, professional learning and stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>• The issue here is the sustainability... In the plan the applicant states in year 3 and 4 we will begin planning for the initiatives long-term sustainability and planning for how we can scale up to other grade levels and subject areas.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant has a very comprehensive implementation plan however the remaining concern is the applicant identifies the need for planning sustainability beyond this grant. The fact that the applicant will address this in years 3 and 4 leaves some doubt related to sustainability.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates the implementation of strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existences of a defined structure , the CORE Governance Model for monitoring implementation of this plan</li> <li>• The inclusion of all levels of stakeholders on the CORE Governance Model Team</li> <li>• The defined communication structure for gathering data and feedback in a timely manner (Monthly, Quarterly, Annually)</li> </ul> <p>The applicant has identified effective strategies as stated above for ongoing communication and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>The fact that the applicant has included all stakeholders as members of the governance team provides the assurance that there will be transparency and continual communication related to planning and implementation of this plan.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided specific achievement targets for identified groups as well as the general student population</p> <p>For Clovis USD:.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate student growth in Math for students in grade 4-8 by 25%</li> <li>Increase Math proficiency for all grades by 7% and target grades by 9%</li> </ul> <p>For Sanger USD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase Math proficiency for all grades by 11% and targeted grades by 15%</li> </ul> <p>For both districts the target for decreasing the achievement gap across all sub-groups by 2-4%</p> <p>There is a plan for monitoring student progress against Career and College readiness standards as these student progress towards graduation in 2017.</p> <p>while some may see these targets as less than rigorous there is no more difficult population in the education continuum that the Middle -Level age group. Considering this is a Middle -level based program these targets are rigorous.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a clear and comprehensive Governance Model for plan implementation as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consortium level coordination</li> <li>District level implementation teams</li> <li>Building level teacher support teams</li> </ul> <p>These teams are responsible for monitoring through data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student achievement</li> <li>Plan effectiveness</li> <li>Instructional effectiveness (Professional Learning Community development)</li> <li>Leadership accountability (Principal evaluation process)</li> <li>Resource efficiency</li> </ul> <p>The applicant has demonstrated as indicated above through the use of a comprehensive governance model the ability to plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments needed for the plan implementation. The governance team will use actual student data to measure instructional effectiveness, resource efficiency and accountability for administrative oversight as the focus for evaluating plan implementation.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided sufficient budget information related to plan needs and implementation. the following areas are areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development</li> <li>Equipment procurement</li> <li>Enhancement of infrastructure (One time investment)</li> <li>Personnel Additions</li> <li>Digital curriculum development</li> <li>External Evaluation of program</li> </ul>		

The budget information is clear and concise as to how the resources will be allocated complete with descriptions, desired outcomes and evaluations for each initiative listed above

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

The applicant clearly defines a plan for sustainability as evidenced by:

- Capacity building: Teacher training, planning time and Integrated technology instructional model
- Staffing transition: Training of district staff in the area of technology support in preparation for internal self- sufficiency
- Financial support: Each district will re-organize resources to sustain future technology replacement, reduced staffing levels for the purpose of teacher support (Which will itself be reduced as teachers become trained and more independent)

The applicant relies on a focus of professional development, restructuring of resources to support technology and cross-training of staff as a means of providing sustainability. This is an excellent approach in that once staff experience the professional development they will have that understanding and ability to enhance their teaching skills. Additionally, The cross-training of staff will permit for a flexible use of personnel in an effort to continue to support the continued change in the learning environment. Finally, the redeployment of resources will allow the applicant to develop a more efficient use of resources a a means of plan sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Nothing identified

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This is a very comprehensive plan and provides the resources which will assist students in becoming proficient in 21st century learning skills . The Middle School is the most challenging time in a child's educational career. This plan implements learning modalities which provide opportunities for small group learning environments, technology integration, student collaboration and flexible use of time. Professional development and teacher support is clearly a priority as a means of ensuring instructional effectiveness. resources are targeted towards instructional improvement as indicated through increased student achievement.

The issues of concern are

Planning in years 3 and 4 there seems to be a lack of planning for program expansion

it is not clearly stated if there was in place a Teacher and Principal evaluation process tied to student achievement.

Total	210	180
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant submitted two different plans;</p> <p>Common Core State Standards Teacher Launch Pad:</p> <p>This plan consists of eight school districts stretching across southern and Northern California and includes 1,766 schools, 45,335 educators and 1,026,219 students. The purpose of this proposal is to create Common Core State Standards based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessments</li><li>• instructional strategies</li><li>• curriculum resources</li></ul> <p>The second proposal is focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building infrastructure for regular knowledge sharing between CORE districts as they transition to new models of personal learning</li><li>• Leverage unique CORE partnerships to extend personal learning within CORE districts and to other districts throughout the Country</li></ul> <p>As I reviewed both of these proposals I would favor supporting the second proposal as it is most closely aligned with the original purpose of the main proposal. The development of a personal learning environment will require intense focus if it is to be successful.</p>		