



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0726MO-1 for Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis have presented a reform vision that addresses some of the core educational assurance areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State of Missouri has adopted the rigorous standards of the Common Core State standards for English Language Arts and Math. The districts have proposed the establishment of a robust and comprehensive Literacy framework for use in all of the schools identified in the grant proposal. The proposal supports the fact that through the implementation of the Common Core and the Literacy framework, students will graduate college and career ready. • The districts have articulated a plan to continuously measure students growth through the use of technology systems that will provide educators real-time data on students and allow them to adjust and differentiate instruction based on students needs. • A large component of the consortium's reform efforts include ensuring educators receive an abundance of training and support in order to implement the reforms with fidelity. However, little was presented that spoke to how the consortium plans to recruit, reward, or retain effective teachers and principals. To that extent, the state plans to adopt a new teacher and principal evaluation model that will include components towards developing teachers. • The consortium recognizes the importance of ALL students being successful. However, through their approach to reform, they have decided not to focus efforts specifically on the lowest performing schools, but provide the reform efforts in all of the identified schools with the goal of strengthening instructional practices for all students. <p>The consortium has provided a vision that focuses on some of the core educational areas. The vision is lacking in two of the educational areas as discussed above. As a result, the consortium scores in the middle range.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In the onset of the grant proposal, the lead LEA - Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis Inc. and the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence began the process of determining what districts to invite to participate in the grant proposal by simply determining which LEAs had at least one school with at least 40% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. Once this was determined, invitations were sent to those LEAs inviting them to participate in the RttT-D initiative. Although this meets the competition's baseline requirement, this does not present a reflective method for selecting districts or schools for participation.</p> <p>The consortium has provided the total number of schools, students, and educators they will serve through their reform model. Again, missing from the discussion, is how the schools in each of the districts were selected to participate in this initiative.</p> <p>The consortium has presented sound information verifying their compliance with the requirements of submitting a grant application. However, there is limited evidence that the consortium or individual districts participated in focused discussion around how the districts and/or schools would be selected for participation. As a result, the consortium ranks in the middle range.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in conjunction with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence, has provided clear and compelling evidence of how it plans to impact change and how these changes can be scaled up beyond the participating schools.</p> | | |

- Major focus on providing comprehensive and effective professional development to ensure fidelity in implementation of the reform model.
- Clear plan for monitoring effectiveness of professional development and implementing changes if warranted.
- Implement train-the-trainer model; trainers will ensure successful implementation of reform strategies and also work to training other educators in schools not included in the consortium
- Establishment of advisory board with members from a number of stakeholder groups: educators, community volunteers, school board members, and parents.

Through the aforementioned strategies and goals, the consortium will be able to successfully implement many of the reform measures in the participating schools as well as schools/districts not currently identified for participation. The robust training of personnel will ensure the continuation of highly trained personnel to promote implementation in all schools in the LEAs' districts. In addition, through the creation of the Project Advisory Board, the consortium will involve a diverse group of stakeholders to ensure it is carrying out its stated goals and objectives with fidelity.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
|---|----|---|

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis vision for increasing performance on summative assessments is predicated on the fact that once students increase and improve their literacy skills, they will achieve greater success in all academic areas. Their vision for implementing the robust literacy reform model revolves around providing intense training, support and monitoring. This is an ambitious and achievable goal towards increasing performance on summative assessments through an increased focus on literacy attainment.

Inherent in increasing performance on summative assessments will be that all students perform at greater levels, thus decreasing the achievement gaps between subgroups. The intense focus on various types of literacy including, but not limited to: reading, writing, technical reading and writing, public speaking, and numerical literacy will lead to the shrinking of gaps between subgroups.

It is the goal of the Consortium to increase graduation and college enrollment through again implementing the intense focus on literacy thereby providing students with the skill sets to advance through K-12 schooling successfully and then enrolling in postsecondary institutions. In addition, the consortium plans to achieve these ends through a change and improvement in climate/culture.

Although the plan presented by the district to improve performance on summative assessments for all students thereby decreasing achievement gaps is strong, lacking are specific ambitious goals for addressing graduation rates and college enrollment. With the increase focus on literacy, graduation and college enrollment rates may increase, but specific strategies to address these areas are needed. As a result, the district scores in the middle range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The majority of the schools participating in the reform proposal have shown gains in the past four years:

- 65% of the schools qualified for Distinction in Performance based on high levels of student achievement or consistent progress
- 53% of the participating LEAS exceeded state graduation rates
- 88% of the participating LEAS have year-to-year improvement over past four years
- 94% of the participating LEAS have consistent year-to-year student improvement.

Absent from the grant proposal is discussion on how the consortium have implemented reforms to assist the persistently lowest-achieving or low-achieving schools.

The district plans to use funds from the RttT-D grant to create a student data system that will be made available to students, educators, and parents.

Although the consortium has demonstrated a positive trajectory in terms of improving student learning outcomes, missing are

supports that have been or will be provided to the lowest achieving schools in addition to how the schools in the consortium have shared student performance data in the past. As a result the district ranks in the middle of the scoring range.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
|--|---|---|

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The Consortium abides by the rules and procedures put forth by the state of Missouri in regards to providing financial information to the public. The application specifically states that LEA school financial and achievement information is found on the district report card and can be viewed by the public. In addition a discussion concerning the procedures and requirements around mandatory audits are presented. However, specific evidence is not presented that supports efforts to be transparent in regards to making actual personnel salaries available to the public. Furthermore, it is not clear what and to what extent non-personnel expenditures are make public and accessible. As a result of this missing information, the district ranks low on this performance measure.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
|---|----|---|

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis have provided some evidence that the state of Missouri is working towards implementing a policy environment that will be supportive of their reform measures to create personalized learning environments. Under current Missouri law:

- Districts may grant credit for courses through alternate methods as approved by the state board of education
- Alternate time schedules can be implemented by districts if requested
- State is currently developing guidelines and policy to guide districts implementation of "alternative methods" of assigning course credit

Although the state appears to be making strides towards creating a more feasible environment for enacting change towards personalized learning environments, it appears the state has not currently made significant strides towards this end. As a result, the district ranks in the middle range.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
|---|----|---|

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis and the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have included some stakeholders in the development of their reform proposal. They have shown evidence of engaging the following stakeholders through face-to-face meetings, written, as well as electronic communication:

- School Superintendents
- Central Office Personnel
- Universities
- Educational Organizations

Each of the aforementioned stakeholder groups have provided written letters in support of the proposed reform efforts. However, void from the discussion of stakeholder involvement are how the voices of teachers, students, parents, community members, and community organizations were engaged, if at all. Due to the absence of these critical voices, the district rates in the middle of the performance measure.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 Each LEA included in the consortia participated in a process to analyze their current status in regards to identifying needs and gaps. Gaps were identified through the use of MAP data and the Missouri School Improvement System. In addition, reports from the Missouri Evaluation Plan and the Missouri Top 10 by 20 plan were considered in the analysis. The following are the focus areas ascertained through the evaluation process:

- Creating a tool to measure growth and assess instruction
- Effectively implementing literacy instruction to ALL groups of students, especially with English Language Learners

- Gaps between test scores of special education and free/reduced lunch students and their classmates that do not receive free/reduced lunch and are not classified as special education
- Increasing ACT scores
- Meeting state goals in communication arts

The consortia and districts' work around analyzing their current status in regards to greatest needs and gaps is both comprehensive and thorough.

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

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 10 |
| <p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have developed an achievable plan that details how it will address some of the requirements as it relates to preparing students for College and Careers.</p> <p>The overarching goal of the consortium is to greatly impact the literacy skills of all students served in the selected schools. In order to focus students on the goal of increasing literacy so that they are prepared for life beyond high school, students will work with their teachers and counselors to create individual goals that includes how they will go about becoming ready for college and career. Students will determine the academic paths they would like to pursue through the use of personal inventory assessments. Students will participate in efforts such as class meetings, learning focused school-wide activities, and service projects that will teach and exemplify such skills as communication, team work, public speaking, and creativity. Project based learning will be used to support and increase student's critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Although the application speaks to the ability of students to examine and plan for their individual academic pathways, little evidence is presented to support the development of personalized sequences of instructional content. Students will have access to online courses that may personalize instruction for students who choose to take them.</p> <p>The application states that students will learn to assess their progress by using incremental benchmarks to ensure they are meeting their goals. However, it is unclear how often these benchmarks will take place and how the students will access them.</p> <p>Very little evidence is presented as to how the consortium will address the needs of high needs students other than providing them with online courses.</p> <p>Missing from the narrative is discussion on how the district will train and support students on the use of tools to track and manage their learning.</p> <p>The consortium has presented some achievable goals and plans as to how it will personalize instruction in order to support students' efforts of becoming college and career ready. However, many of the strategies presented are lacking in ambition. In addition, the application does not specifically speak to many of the selection criteria. As a result, the district rates in the medium range.</p> | | |
| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 10 |

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Great St. Louis and the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have developed an ambitious and achievable plan to provide professional development and supports for their teachers as they implement the reform model. The consortiums' approach to professional development and supports include:

- Development of "Learning Management System" - provide support and resource for professional learning plan
- Online courses through the "Virtual Learning Center
- Development of District Leadership Team
- Instructional Coaches
- District Lead Teachers
- School Leadership Team

The instructional coaches, district lead teachers, and school leadership team members will participate in a great deal of

training around the reform model and then provide training to all of the educators in the schools participating in the reform efforts. Absent from the discussion was how educators will access actionable information to respond to individual student needs.

The district and school leadership teams will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of educators through the use of classroom observation checklists and protocols, site visits, and interviews. There is no discussion around using data from teacher evaluation systems or a plan for increasing the number of students taught by effective teachers or principals.

The consortium has provided a good first step in creating a comprehensive plan to provide professional development and supports for all educators around ensuring the reform measures are carried out. However, due to the missing components mentioned above, the district rates in the medium range.

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>The Cooperating School Districts (CSD) of Greater St. Louis Inc. is the lead LEA for the consortium of schools represented in this grant application. The CSD has a board of directors, executive director, and senior management. The CSD employs 50 full-time employees. Employees of the CSD will work closely with the districts to ensure the strategies are implemented with fidelity. This structure for consortium governance is a comprehensive approach to providing adequate support to the member LEAs.</p> <p>The reform plan calls for the development of district and school leadership teams. These teams will be charged with providing training, support, and monitoring the implementation of the reform model. In addition to these leadership teams, the districts will establish District Advisory Committees made up of parents, community members, teacher association representatives and other stakeholders. Inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders on the Advisory Committee is critical to ensuring multiple voices are included. The district and school leadership teams will make decisions on school schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, staffing models, and budget issues.</p> <p>Although there is not a current plan in place, the district and school leadership teams will work with their respective schools to develop guidelines for awarding credit. The consortium will use several different means for allowing students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, including: the Missouri Assessment Program test, the Missouri End-of-Course exams, online assessments provided through CSD's District's-Choice Online Learning Program.</p> <p>The consortium has a partnership with the St. Louis Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC), who provides support to districts in the consortium through the employment of four full-time special educational consultants. In addition, the RPCD employs three full-time staff members who provide support to educators that work with English Language Learners. Another effort mentioned to help support students with special needs is the use of online learning programs.</p> <p>Overall, the governance structure detailed by the consortium is appropriate and adequate for ensuring the reform efforts are carried out with fidelity. However, clear plans for how students will earn credit based on mastery and at multiple times and in comparable ways is lacking. Providing extra support for teachers who work with students with disabilities and English learners is a good first step in ensuring their needs are met. The district ranks in the high medium range of this performance measure.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 5 |

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence plan to make sure districts and schools participating in the reform proposal have access to low cost internet service in order to facilitate the delivery of online resources such as curriculum and training. In addition 24/7 access to online training materials will be available to educators, parents, and stakeholders. Although these are important resources to have in place, providing only these tools is achievable, but lacks ambition.

It is unclear how the consortium will provide technical support to students, parents, and other stakeholders. The consortium employs a technology staff that will serve as a resource to the schools and educators taking part in the grant.

The consortium plans to use grant funds to create an online learning portal for students and parents. The portal will allow students and parents to view information about the students' academic progress and allow them to share information with teachers. There is no mention if the consortium plans to include a platform to allow students and parents to export data.

The consortium will use the data system already established in one of the LEAs as the project database. Once implemented in the other participating LEAs, districts and schools will be able to store, track, and analyze student performance data and link it with the Missouri School Information System, which houses data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This system will be able to provide a wealth of student information to inform educators on how best to create effective learning environments for their students. However, there is no mention that these systems will include human resource or budget data.

Due to the missing components in this performance measure, the district ranks in the middle of the medium range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 15 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have developed a strong plan to gauge the effectiveness of its reform efforts throughout the participating LEAs. The consortium will implement the following project evaluation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Project Advisory Board (PAB) made up of the Project Level Teams, parents, community, teacher association representatives, and district leaders • Use of the Missouri Student Information System (MOSIS) to access real time student, educator, school, and district level data • District and School Leadership teams will review and analyze both formative and summative data in an effort to increase personalization for all students • District and School Leadership teams will monitor program implementation and effectiveness through the use of established protocols and procedures • Instructional coaches will perform site visits to monitor progress as it relates to the reform initiatives <p>Based on the aforementioned ambitious and achievable measures around the consortium's continuous improvement process, the consortium ranks high.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis and the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence plan to continue implementing strategies used at the onset of the grant planning to communicate with various stakeholder groups. The consortium asked for feedback from various stakeholder groups and used their feedback to make modifications to their grant proposal. The consortium plans to continue these efforts through the use of the district and school level leadership teams in conjunction with advisory committees. Although this is a formidable strategy, it lacks ambition towards ensuring a focused communication strategy is in place. As a result, the district ranks in the medium range for this performance measure.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have identified 10 performance measures and clearly articulated the selection and rationale for these measures.</p> <p>Currently, the state of Missouri nor the consortium of participating schools have a method in place to measure the effectiveness of teachers or administrators. However, plans are in place to create such a system in 2013. The proposed system will include mechanisms to measure student growth.</p> <p>The pre-K-3 and 4-8 performance measures are achievable and ambitious and take into account academic as well as social-emotional indicators.</p> <p>Some of the academic indicators for grades 9 - 12 are less than ambitious. For example, the baseline for 10th grade literacy in math is 89 and the goal presented post grant is 92. The goals around career and post-secondary educational readiness and graduation rates are vague in that no base line data is provided to judge the ambition of reaching their ultimate goals</p> | | |

around these performance measures. The ASVAB assessment tool will be used to assess the career interests of students in an effort to measure career readiness. The consortium have provided the percentages of students who completed the FAFSA paperwork during the previous school year.

The district ranks in the medium range of this performance measure.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have provided a detailed and robust plan to evaluate its approach to reform. They have created a contingency and congruence model that will allow the participating LEAs to use a cause and effect analysis throughout the project.

Plans are in place to evaluate each step of the implementation process by answering the following questions: "are the activities, processes or outcomes consistent with the research and theory?" and "are the actual activities, processes or outcome congruent with those described?" If these questions are answered in the negative, the participating LEAs will seek to make adjustments and or changes.

In addition, the Consortium plans to track each investment to determine if the resources expended were justified and led to the effective implementation of the reform efforts. As a result of the districts' comprehensive approach to evaluation, the district ranks high on this measure.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have presented a detailed budget that describes how they will use grant funds to support their reform efforts.

The budget set forth is very personnel driven with close to half of the funds requested through the proposal going towards salaries and benefits. Although having highly trained and skilled personnel to drive the implementation of the reform effort is important, the sustainability of these personnel costs after the initial grant period is questionable.

Although some of the budget expenditures will be reduced over the course of the grant funding, i.e. training materials will be reduced 50% in years 2,3, and 4 and instructional materials will be reduced 50% in years 2-3, and to 25% in year 4, it is unclear what expenses, if any, are one time in nature.

The consortium has developed a plan for the ShowMe project to become self-funding by the end of the grant period. The consortium has not developed a budget beyond the initial grant period and as a result further sustainability efforts for the other reform efforts are vague. The hope is that additional funding will come from educational services provided throughout the state, partnerships with civic and corporate groups, and contributions from community foundations and private sources. Although these are appropriate funding sources for future sustainability plans, a clear plan for obtaining this additional funding is absent from the proposal. As a result, the district ranks in the medium range of this performance measure.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have presented a vague plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan states that funding will come from the following sources to sustain the reform efforts:

- Providing quality educational services statewide
- Partnerships with civic and corporate groups
- Contributions from community foundations and private sources

A plan is not included in the application presenting a budget for three years after the term of the grant.

A clear plan for sustainability after the grant term was not presented and as a result, the consortium ranks low of this

performance measure.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence with collaboration of some stakeholders have developed a reform model that they hope will increase academic attainment through the personalization of the learning environment.

The consortium will partner with the Missouri Chamber Education Foundation to facilitate the "Show Me Scholars Program."

The focus of this program is to encourage, promote, and support students ability to successfully graduate from high school and succeed in post secondary education. This program will provide mentoring to students, allow students to create a personalized plan of study to pursue college and career, and provide for the development of soft skills such as team work, leadership and public speaking skills. The Show Me Scholars Program will be implemented through a collaboration with the local chamber of commerce, school district and business professionals. The Show Me Scholars Program is an achievable and ambitious effort towards creating a culture supportive of college and career attainment.

The consortium have identified seven population-level results that are in alignment with the overarching goals of the reform proposal.

The consortium plans to use several robust methods of continuously gathering data to evaluate the effectiveness of the reform proposals and goals. Through the use of the district and school leadership teams as well as advisory boards made of different stakeholders, the consortium will consistently monitor its reform efforts. The consortium plans to develop additional data collecting and sharing systems in addition to using and expanding several data systems already in place.

Although the plan states that parents will be a part of the LEAs advisory team, more robust efforts should be taken to involve and engage parents, students, and families around the reform efforts.

Baseline data for the population-level performance measures will be provided during the current school year. After which, annual performance measures will be determined.

Overall, the goals and performance measures are achievable and some aspects are ambitious. A more robust plan would include greater and specific strategies for engaging all stakeholders around the reform efforts and how the proposed strategies will be scaled up to additional LEAs and schools. As a result, the district scores in the medium range for this performance measure.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have developed a plan that details how they will create efforts to personalize learning environments for students, increase college and career readiness, and increase the effectiveness of educators and administrators. The plans set forth have buy in from identified stakeholders.

Through the consortium's overarching goal of increasing different types of literacy skills in all students and providing a network of support to personalize and increase the supports around students readiness for college and careers, the consortium has met absolute priority 1.

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Total | 210 | 132 |
|-------|-----|-----|

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis in partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Excellence have included as a part of their reform proposal budget supplements to fund additional efforts to personalize learning environments for students and provide additional support for students most at risk.

The first optional budget request seeks to fund an aggressive tutoring program that will target grades PK-3. The OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring program seeks to create a network of retired individuals to volunteer in elementary schools and tutor students most at risk of not achieving academic success. Through the use of this ambitious and achievable strategy for providing personalized student support, the consortium has predicted that over 2,000 students will benefit from this tutoring program. The budget includes funds that will be used to support the overall management of the program, training and training materials for the tutors, and marketing to attract tutors to the program. The plan states that once the initial costs of marketing and training the tutors occurs, the funds needed to sustain the program will be minimal. In addition, the plan identifies other sources of support for the OASIS tutoring program such as: individual donors, corporations, and program fees.

The Consortium is seeking additional grant funds to support the diverse needs of teen parents. The consortium hopes to partner with Parents as Teachers, a national center that supports efforts to work with teen parents. The consortium has identified the need to create a more robust system of support for teen mothers and fathers so they along with their children can achieve academic success and strive towards college and career opportunities. The project is projected to support a minimum of 300 children including the teens and their babies and includes such supports as home visits, parenting skill development, and literacy enrichment for the babies and teens. Educators working to provide the aforementioned services will undergo intense training and a thoughtful plan is in place to track the effectiveness of the educators as well as the proposed support strategies.

In order to create improved climates and cultures within the participating LEAs and districts, the consortium has proposed a partnership with the "Wyman Teen Outreach Program (TOP). TOP seeks to instill in students the ability to think critically, develop healthy attitudes, and make good decisions. The TOP personnel will facilitate the development of these skills through once a week group meetings and service learning projects. Each district will have personnel trained to implement this model and the goal is to serve 4000 students. A plan is in place to consistently monitor the effectiveness of the program through pre and post surveys, audits, and observations. The Wyman organization also provides an online data management system to track students' progress.

The consortium have provided three dynamic proposals for providing additional personalized supports for students and their families. The budgets presented are feasible and the plans lend themselves to sustainability and future replication after the initial grant funding has ended.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0726MO-2 for Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA provides ample evidence of a clear plan to build on core educational assurance areas toward the RTT-D goals.

They articulate a focused approach to accelerate student achievement:

- Focus on literacy: "not only text literacy, but also visual literacy, media literacy, and information literacy;"
- High cognitive demand tasks and cross-disciplinary reading and writing;
- Strong connection to Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts;
- Incorporation of standards for social-emotional learning;
- Professional development provided on-site and via distance learning, and through online professional learning communities

The LEAC shows clear intent to deepen student learning through high standards for teachers, students, school leaders and community agencies:

- Strong alignment with Common Core;
- Key goals include examining school data, team empowerment, literacy for all, fidelity in implementation, and "monitor like crazy;"
- Track record of every teacher being a teacher of writing;
- Prior initiatives validated by research;
- Plan to create a "data warehouse" including resources for students in literacy, climate, culture, and social emotional learning;
- Plan for educator evaluation;
- Specific roles identified for teachers, literacy coaches, and principals as leading parts of literacy reform;

The LEAC has somewhat tied their efforts to personalize student learning to clear, significant, and achievable equity goals.

- Alignment with statewide reform plan to improve literacy and specific policy goals thereof;
- Turning around patterns of low performance in all schools, rather than a focus on particular low-performing schools;
- Vision of improvement in literacy for all students, though no specific equity goals are made explicit in this component.

Overall, this section of their application shows a strong reform vision, though their equity goals could be more explicit, and provides evidence for a middle score in the high range.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA proposal provides solid evidence of an an implementation process to support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation.

The proposal solidly describes the process of school selection, and the targeted schools meet/do not meet the RTT-D eligibility requirements.

- Target populations include nearly half of the students in the state of Missouri, 46 districts in all;
- Individual LEAs will provide at least one school as a participating campus, which have approximately 52% of their students receiving free/reduced lunch;

The proposal includes a detailed list of the schools that will participate in the grant activities.

- All participating schools are identified and organized by LEA. A few participating schools have less than 40% poverty but most have significantly more;

The proposal describes the number of participating students affected by the grant proposal.

- All participating schools' populations are listed.

Overall, this section provides detailed and specific evidence of the LEA's clarity of intent to involve and affect student learning, and thus qualifies for a score in the high end of the high range.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
|---|----|---|

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA proposal provides distinctive evidence of a high-quality plan to effect change in the LEA as a whole as well as a plan to learn from their efforts so that they may be implemented elsewhere, though in the logic model, global connections among components cloud the ability to trace influence from particular components to particular outcomes.

The proposal realistically envisions a process of positive change in the district as a whole.

- Emphasis on literacy across the school and improving school climate and culture;
- Emphasis on school/ classroom outcomes, student outcomes, and life-long outcomes;

The logic model describes the various sub-initiatives of the proposal and their summative contributions toward common long-term outcomes.

- Clear supports are tied to interventions and outcomes;
- Supports include community organization partnerships, state, district, school, community/parent/teacher/student voice, research/ knowledge base, time for planning, funding;
- One limitation to the logic model as presented is that all inputs are tied to all interventions, which in turn are tied to all outcomes.

The vision for improving student learning outcomes is clear.

- School and classroom outcomes address literacy focus, positive school culture, highly effective leadership and teaching, high levels of student literacy learning and engagement, positive social-emotional development, and high student motivation for doing what is right.
- Measurable student outcomes address improved student pro-social behaviors and increased student academic performance;
- Student outcomes are tied to demonstrable and measureable indices;
- Lifelong outcomes address college- and career-readiness, responsible and caring community engagement, and ethical self-reliance in adulthood;
- The representative school sampling of the proposal may make coherence of advancement toward these outcomes difficult, but does not seem unachievable.

Overall, this section of the proposal provides solid evidence of a high-quality plan, despite the lack of explicit influence evident in the logic model, and is scored in the middle of the high range.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
|---|----|---|

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA's proposal shows that based on realistic interventions and prior achievement, their plan is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and address performance on summative assessments, orientation to reduce achievement gaps, and increase graduation and college enrollment rates. They describe a plan to gather data on post-secondary degree attainment in the proposal, though the data are not currently gathered by the state at a broad level.

Regarding improved students learning outcomes, they show a solid track record of improvement as well as a focused plan to continue this trend.

- Summative assessment data will be gathered via Missouri Assessment Program grade level assessments in Communication Arts and End-of-Course Assessments in English II;
- Increases are forecast for summative assessment improvements across school sites (with the exception of Avilla R-VIII, which forecasts declines in Communication Arts Proficiency that are unexplained in the proposal);

Regarding closing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates, the LEA has shown resolve to close gaps, though the representation of the data made forecast gains difficult to discern.

- The proposal aims to compare the performance of students in the identified subgroups against statewide average performance;
- The proposal will compare averages of 4- or 5-year graduation rates with statewide goals for improvement targets;
- The representation of gains in appendix A(4)(b) does not make explicit how a gap would gradually narrow between subgroups, because the increases in underperforming groups are not compared with increases in the highest-performing group;
- It was unclear through the representation of the data in appendix A(4)(c) why the groups showing the highest graduation rates (Asian and Multi-racial, in most schools) showed declines while all other groups were forecast to improve;

Regarding increased college enrollment, the proposal sets forth the beginnings of a plan to expand college-preparation initiatives and improve college enrollment.

- The proposal aims to gather data on the number of students enrolling in a state public institution of higher education within 16 months of graduation;
- The proposal describes that the state has only begun to collect college enrollment recently, so implementing the capacity to gather comprehensive data would be an important early priority for the project if funded;

Regarding post-secondary degree attainment, the proposal describes an appropriate capacity-building approach to enable participating LEAs to gather and track information.

Overall, this section of the proposal provides moderate evidence for components required by RTT-D, and as such scores in the middle range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has demonstrated a record of steady success over the past several years.

Regarding improved student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, the district has shown growth across all schools in nearly all areas.

- 65% of participating districts have qualified for "Distinction in Performance," and this recognition has experienced continuous growth over four years;
- Participating LEAs have also shown improvement in graduation rates and year-to-year student improvement;
- Consensus exists among districts about literacy as a high leverage focus;
- LEA Curriculum Specialists involved in forum meetings to share growth in strategies used to support student success;
- Identified need for additional teacher training to help them use performance data to drive instructional decisions and to develop individualized learning plans.

Regarding the significance of their reforms in turning around lowest-achieving or lowest-performing schools, the LEA has shown general improvement but does not describe specific actions taken to turn around lowest-achieving or lowest-performing schools.

- Focus on examining and replicating climate and culture of one school that developed from an APR of 7 to APR of 13 in three years;
- Focus on English Language Learners' increased performance on ACCESS test among districts who have also seen gains in special education, free/ reduced lunch students' achievement;
- No explicit focus on strategies used to turn around low-achieving or low-performing schools;

Regarding the transparency and access of their student performance data, the district has a moderate track record of sharing data with teachers, parents and students on-demand throughout the school year.

- Statewide Sunshine Law and audit requirements gather data on all schools;
- Records available on request;
- Unclear the extent to which student performance data is available at the individual level on-demand to teachers, parents and students;

Overall, the LEA's performance in this section is solid but not comprehensively detailed. This component scores in the middle range.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
|--|---|---|

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has demonstrated efforts toward a high level of transparency in processes, practices, investments, and access to data as required in the RTT-D proposal.

- Statewide sunshine law states that "evidence is public and published in many ways;"
- All school financial and achievement information publicly available on district report card;
- General, special revenue, debt service, and capital projects funds are shared;
- Specific information about whether actual personnel (and non-personnel) salaries for all staff are available is unstated.

Because they have demonstrated a reasonable level of transparency, but are unclear about all levels required by the grant proposal, this element scores at the middle range.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has demonstrated some markers of evidence that they have access to the right conditions with the appropriate level of autonomy to implement their proposed interventions in their state context.

- The state allows for alternative assignment of credit for mastery, and is developing guidelines and procedures to be used by LEAs in doing so;
- State identified "grade level expectations" provide capacity for a basis for course competencies;
- Possibility of awarding credit for virtual courses or having course-specific competency tests;
- The high number of participating LEAs raises questions about balance between autonomy and consistency;
- A letter from the state department of elementary and secondary education states that "the application does not show a clear alignment to the state's goals," though it is unclear whether or not these concerns were addressed in the final draft of the proposal;
- While many conditions are possible, it is unclear how immediately some of these reforms would be able to be launched at the statewide level to support proposed grant work.

In sum, the proposal shows a moderate degree of the appropriate conditions for their interventions to be successful, and as such, rates at the high end of the middle range.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has demonstrated solid evidence of stakeholder engagement in the proposal, with a moderate degree of involvement by students, parents, school leaders, elected officials, and community agencies.

The LEA describes work to involve stakeholders in the development of the project and incorporate their feedback into the proposal.

- The first step was securing buy-in from participating LEA superintendents;
- The proposal notes challenges incorporating district-wide plans for literacy;
- The appendices provide evidence of Memoranda of Understanding from all participating districts, signed by superintendents and school board presidents;
- Records of emails sent summarize solicited feedback about the grant, and the email addresses are representative of the participating districts;
- It was unclear from the evidence provided whether the respondents included students and parents.

The LEA has collective bargaining representation, and the unions have indicated a high degree of willingness to work with school district leadership toward student learning improvement initiatives.

- Letters of support are provided from local chapters of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers;

The district provides numerous letters of support from key stakeholders in support of the proposal.

- Multiple letters of support show representation from participating LEA leadership, non-profit organizations (e.g. Gateway Media Literacy, Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring), higher education partners (e.g. Lindenwood University, Maryville University), educational associations (e.g. Missouri Distance Learning Association, St. Louis Regional Professional Development Center), community organizations (e.g. Parents as Teachers, Wyman), and business organizations (e.g. SqoolTechs)
- Letters attest to specific expected partnership initiatives (e.g. Scholastic Achievement Partners' letter states that they "are prepared to provide the necessary support to CSD... to implement the strategies, structures, and systems necessary to achieve the goals of the grant."

The extent to which the LEA leadership has cultivated active and engaged partners supports their proposal though exactly how the feedback fed back into final revisions of the proposal was unclear, and as such, scores in the low end of the high range.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
|--|---|---|

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has demonstrated solid evidence for a high quality plan to implement personalized learning environments as proposed.

Regarding the quality of their plan,

- Key goals are identified (e.g. developing online learning)
- Activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities are logical and correspond to the stated project goals;
- The timeline is explicit and sequential;
- Deliverables are specified, though some are more general than others (e.g. "students will have ownership in their social-emotional development goals," vs. "student discipline referrals will decrease")
- The parties responsible for the deliverables are identified and appropriate
- The overall credibility of the plan is strong, though ambitious given the broad nature of the consortium.

The reform proposal is logical.

- The elements included correspond to the overall focus on developing students' capacities in literacy, though there is a significant teacher-driven thrust to the proposal because of its wide scope across LEAs.

The LEA has effectively identified needs and gaps to inform their proposal.

- Educational needs identified by teams in CSD and SWC consortia;
- Gaps identified by examination of standardized test data;
- Identification of literacy as a focus, specifically regarding English as a Second Language services for English learners;
- Gaps noted between highest-performing groups and students with special needs or those receiving free/ reduced lunch;
- Other identified issues include increasing ACT scores, meeting state achievement goals, and maintaining competitive salaries.

Overall, the district has demonstrated evidence of a high quality plan, though inter-district variability may confound the plan as stated. It warrants a score in the high range.

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

| | Available | Score |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 13 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has articulated a high quality plan to improve teaching and learning through personalizing the learning environment, though its large scope makes the strength of local approaches difficult to discern, differentiate and evaluate.

Regarding their proposed approach to learning to empower all learners in age-appropriate manners, the LEA focuses on expanding the definition of literacy as it has conventionally been taught, to emphasize 21st century literacy skills.

- Literacy includes text literacy, but also visuals, media, video and song, and includes resources not only available in books but on TV or on the internet;
- Cross disciplinary literacy focus and discipline-specific literacies are emphasized (e.g. comprehending word problems in mathematics);

The LEA has set forth a strong strategy to ensure student access to personalized learning, high quality instructional approaches and content, regular feedback, and appropriate accommodations for high need students.

- Attention to particular learners' interests;
- Emphasis on metacognitive skills (e.g. goal setting, critical thinking, problem solving);
- Innovations in instructional approaches include distance learning, project based learning, experiential learning, service

learning;

- Students engage in a personal inventory assessment (already in place in most schools);
- Student access to regular feedback is implicit;
- Differentiated instruction, project-based learning and other collaborative structures develop students' social emotional strengths as well as academic strengths;
- Regarding high needs students, the proposal describes accommodations, interventions, instructional practice and structures to meet individual academic and developmental needs, though it is unclear how these are specified for high needs students and differentiated from the strategies available for all students participating in the proposal;

The LEA has not made clear their intent to provide mechanisms to provide training and support to students, teachers, school leaders and parents to ensure that all understand how to use tools to track and manage their learning.

- The proposal states that "students will have access to online tools and resources to track their progress and growth," though specific examples are not provided.

Overall, the LEA has set forth a solid proposal for a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment, though a level of detail was missing on some elements, and qualifies for a score in the high end of the middle range.

| | | |
|---|----|----|
| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 14 |
|---|----|----|

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has a highly ambitious plan for addressing teacher and educator development; its achievability is less clear.

Regarding educators' engagement in training and participation in professional learning communities, the LEA sets forth an ambitious but achievable goal to increase personalized learning in their schools.

- Emphasis on instructional strategies to personalize learning toward academic success;
- Emphasis on collaborative learning and collaborative work environment;
- Emphasis on positive climate and culture;
- Professional learning curriculum proposed for all teachers in participating district to create positive school climate and culture and teach literacy across the curriculum in all grades and subject areas-- total number of educators affected is unspecified, but for 73,300 students, and 184 schools, the faculty size varies between 6 and 97, so the total number of participating teachers is in the thousands. Developing that many practitioners' capacities in such challenging areas is ambitious, and possibly hard to achieve;

The LEA proposes significant online and in-person professional development for teachers and principals to increase these educators' access to and knowledge of tools and resources to accelerate student progress toward college and career readiness.

- Project coaches support work locally and online, significant roles played by District Leadership Teams and School Leadership Teams;
- Such leadership teams include significant professional learning, data analysis, and planning time.
- Learning Management system builds on existing Virtual Learning Center in lead LEA, which will deploy professional learning modules.

The LEA is oriented toward continuous improvement.

- The proposal includes district-level and project-level descriptions of continuous improvement processes.

The LEA demonstrates commitment to increasing teacher and principal effectiveness.

- The overall process described aims to increase educator effectiveness, though specific numbers of students with access to these educators is implicit;

The LEA sets forth a high quality plan to personalize the learning environment through expanding teacher and leader capacity.

- The plan to personalize the learning environment through expanding educator capacity effectively addresses key goals, deliverables, timeline, and parties responsible. The rationales for the activities are provided within the proposal narrative;

Overall, the LEA is purposeful about their intent to support teachers' and principals' development, though specific benchmarks

for teacher effectiveness or expansion are not stated. As a result, this merits a score in the high end of the middle range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 8 |
| <p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA is oriented toward gains for its teachers and students, evidenced by its organization and prior record of collaborative work, though the specifics of their intended goals regarding student ownership of learning is inexplicit.</p> <p>The LEA central offices are organized to provide support and services to all participating schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperating School Districts (CSD) already provides professional development to member LEAs, as well as cooperative purchasing, a health insurance trust, and a retirement trust; CSD has extensive budget management experience and established policies and procedures for HR; Existing staff already focus on issues of literacy and school climate; New staff for the grant will be employed by CSD. <p>The school leadership teams are provided with moderate flexibility and autonomy to facilitate personalized learning initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District level teams and school level teams will be established for each participating LEA, which will work with a district advisory committee; DLTs and SLTs will control school schedules and calendar, personnel decisions, staffing models, school-level budgets and roles and responsibilities, though the personalized learning initiatives are overseen by the lead LEA; <p>Students will be given opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DLTs and SLTs will oversee students' progress to earn credit based on mastery; Project leadership will analyze processes to determine strong practices for credit-mastery; Online courses may be selected from DCOL. <p>Students have access to multiple and opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards, though the modalities of these assessments are unclear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missouri Assessment Program test; Missouri End of Course exams; Assessments provided through DCOL; Coaches will work with DLTs and SLTs to help choosing and utilizing multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery, though these ways are unspecified; Whether or not the opportunities to demonstrate mastery are in multiple modalities is unstated. <p>All students may receive adapted and accessible learning resources and instructional practices, though these are not explicitly tied to the central curricular reforms proposed around literacy and school climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with St. Louis Regional Professional Development Council (RPDC) to develop teachers' capacities to serve students with special needs-- this partnership is confirmed by the organization's letter of support; Regarding students with disabilities, DLTs and SLTs will emphasize student accomodations in school plans, e.g. technology integration and mechanisms to provide individualized support; Specific planned accomodations are unstated; The RPDC also provides resources to work with English Language Learners, though strategies to serve this population are unspecified. <p>The LEA has not set forth a high quality plan specifically tailored to how the LEA will support project implementation, apart from the main plan specified in section C.</p> <p>Overall, this section of the proposal is solid but general, and warrants a score in the middle range.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| <p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> | | |

The LEA sets forth a plan to expand and ensure participants' access to content, tools, and resources in and out of school.

- Many participating LEAs have internet access purchased through MOREnet; the grant proposes to extend access to all participating districts;
- Resources and services will support distance learning and video conferencing;
- Some member districts have insufficient access to participate in grant activities-- discounted access will be provided to these districts through the grant;
- Parents and other stakeholders will have access to "24/7 online training materials" and the proposal describes that they will receive support at local and regional levels through project managers, coaches, and technology consultants.

The proposal provides modest evidence of technology supports for students, teachers, school leaders, families, and other stakeholders.

- Centrally employed technology staff;
- Technology manager position works to ensure that the DLTs and SLTs receive support;
- Districts have technology use policies in place;
- Supports flow through district and site based leadership teams;
- Specific support needs or mechanisms are not made explicit;
- Technology supports for families and other stakeholders are unspecified.

The proposal intends to create a mechanism for parents and students to export information and use data in other systems.

- Online learning portal proposed with these functions, though it does not yet exist;
- Proposed system will be modeled on existing LEA "state-recognized robust data system" which links to state performance data linked to schools, principals and teachers;
- Access to this system directly by students and parents is unspecified, nor is it clear how the system would allow students and parents to export information.

The proposal addresses elements of this section address the areas of this component but are broad and general. For that reason, this section scores in the middle range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 8 |

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA sets forth a general approach to continuously improve its plan.

Their plan to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals is clear.

- Aligned with statewide ESEA flexibility targets for improved performance, decreased achievement gap, and increased graduation rate;
- Ongoing quarterly reporting of progress;
- Project Advisory Board proposed to "analyze, evaluate and consult toward refinement of curricula, program delivery and... program interventions;"
- PAB includes advisory team and parent, community, union, and district representatives;
- Local community advisory committees proposed with similarly diverse membership;
- Review of quantitative and qualitative data proposed, emphasis on adherence to program theory;
- Integration with Missouri Student Information System;
- DLTs and SLTs will explore formative and summative data and develop district- and school-level action plans to personalize instruction based on identified needs;

The plan articulates general phases of continuous improvement during the grant.

- In year one, DLTs and SLTs will use data for climate, culture and social-emotional learning gathered via surveys of students, staff and parents;
- In years two and three comparative data will be gathered;
- The proposal also mentions the use of classroom observations checklists and protocol to support the work of instructional coaches and lead teachers;

- Specific look-fors in these phases of improvement are unspecified.

Overall, the proposal shows a disposition to study and learn from the implementation process during the grant, but a moderate level of specificity, and merits a score in the middle range.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
|--|---|---|

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has existing structures in place to ensure ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

- Evidence of the feedback process used by the LEA is supported in the appendices (e.g. emails providing feedback on the project);
- Record of mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder feedback into proposal;
- Community advisory committees are representative of administrative, teachers, non-certified staff, unions, and parents/community members.
- Specific themes around which to engage internal and external stakeholders are inexplicit.

Because of the reasonable but general level of community engagement, the LEA has scored at the middle-high scale.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA sets forth ambitious yet achievable performance measures. They have provided appropriate and logical rationales for the performance measures and have elsewhere explicitly described how they will review and improve as needed during the grant implementation process.

- The proposal states that no current statewide mechanism exists to enable measurement of the number and percentage of students, by subgroup, whose teacher and principal are highly effective or effective, though the state is implementing educator effectiveness initiatives aligned with Common Core-- nonetheless, a chart including baseline data for effective and highly effective teacher access is provided;
- The chart does not identify particularly challenging LEAs by disaggregating performance measure data by school or district;
- In component A of the proposal, 73,300 students are described as participants, while on the chart for this component the total number of participating students is 17052;
- In the chart, baseline data describe only 10% of students as having an effective teacher, while 41.1 percent have a highly effective teacher -- it did not seem reasonable that there would be more members of the more selective set;
- Missouri Evaluation System being developed that will allow data to be assembled and analyzed with anticipated adoption in 2013;
- State operating under NCLB Flexibility waiver structured around 7 essential principles;
- All districts in state required to use an educator evaluation process by 2014-15;
- Proposal notes that until this system is adopted, principal success will not be evaluated, though they propose to collect longitudinal data around literacy and climate. Similar data will be compared for teachers.
- Student growth will be measured through common formative assessments, performance assessments, student learning objectives, individualized student growth objectives, and student work samples.

In the tables describing concrete targets for performance measure improvement, the goals are identified, but the lack of specifics make it difficult to discern how ambitious or achievable they are.

- Emphasis on assessment of literacy in technology and across the curriculum for all participating students;
- Performance measures for grade bands of students address the required criteria for grades PK-3, 4-8, and 9-12;
- Forecast performance gains are significant, particularly in literacy in language arts for all students K-3 between SY 2014-15 and SY 2015-16 (12 point gain as opposed to 8 and 5 in the years before and after);
- It is clear how each performance measure is to be assessed, though the descriptions of "small increase and moderate increase" per ethnic groups are unspecific and do not make clear how these performance measures correspond to efforts to reduce achievement gaps;
- Performance measures for grades 9-12 address college and career readiness by assessing career entry or post-secondary enrollment congruent with interests, though measuring the latter does not capture the entire picture of readiness as other barriers to college enrollment may exist, particularly socioeconomic barriers;
- Performance measures and supporting chart illustrate filing rates for FAFSA in prior years, though grades 9-12 performance measures do not specify expected gains in FAFSA completion rates;

The LEA has identified a plan for addressing some but not all criteria specified in this section, and thus merits a middle score.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
|---|---|---|

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has articulated **plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities.

- Throughout the proposal various individuals and groups have been identified with ongoing responsibility to evaluate the effectiveness of grant activities but their particular roles in evaluation are not restated in this section;
- Key questions address consistency with research and theory and congruence with activities/ processes/ outcomes described;
- Proposal describes intention to track each investment, giving effectiveness of leadership team training as an example;
- Project coaches and leadership teams will "take stock" of implementation activities;
- Few specifics are provided to make concrete the use of time, staff, money or other resources;

The plan for evaluation does not explicitly address review of documents, budgets, service utilization records, and feedback from stakeholders except in broad terms, nor does the proposal describe a methodological approach to evaluate the impact of grant investments on students' academic success.

The plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments is not separated out from the larger plan and as such is inadequately specific.

Overall, the LEA has demonstrated insufficient evidence for the appropriateness and scope of their plan to evaluate effectiveness, and thus merit a low score on this measure.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has identified all funds to support the project, the funds are sufficient to support the proposal as set forth, and appropriate rationales are given for investments and priorities.

- The budget summary sets forth a priority of investment in personnel and benefits, with a comparatively low investment in equipment to support the kinds of technology described in the proposal;
- Other sources of support (e.g. budget for Cooperating School Districts of St. Louis) are included and described;
- New positions created for the project are listed and briefly described, and the rationales for these positions are provided elsewhere in the proposal;
- Technology investments focus on video conferencing systems and equipment;
- Laptop computers and smart phones for project leadership are included under supplies;
- Few resources mentioned have direct connections to students, parents, or community stakeholders;

The LEA has provided evidence for the description of the use of their proposed funds, though the emphasis is on significant investment in the central organization and less in the schools served, and therefore merits a middle score in this criterion.

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 1 |
|--|----|---|

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA provides a plan for sustainability after the proposed project ends, though the specifics of a "high quality plan" as specified by RTT-D are not addressed separately in this section.

- Connection to CSD four year strategic plan;
- Disposition to seek collaboration with state educational organizations and partnerships;
- Individual LEAs have been tasked with developing a plan by 2016 to continue the efforts of the grant, though the guiding role of the lead LEA in this process is not stated, nor is there any sense of what the CSD role would be post-grant;
- CSD leadership position will be tasked with continuing management of the project, funded through member dues,

community partnerships, and "other state resources". This seems disproportionate and insufficient to ensure any significant continuation of the grant activities;

- Civic and community partnerships are mentioned, though specific approaches to cultivate their support of the initiatives of the grant are unstated;
- No post-grant budget is included;

The description of the proposal's post-grant sustainability shows resolve but no specific plan. This component merits a score in the low end of range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The competitive preference priority is focused on the "Show Me Scholars Program" in this proposal.

The proposal describes how the Show Me Scholars Program builds on critical partnerships, which include public and private organizations.

- Collaboration with state department of elementary and secondary education;
- Aligns with Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program;
- Adopted by Missouri Chamber Education Foundation in 2006;
- "Great Expectations, Great Rewards" program presented to all 8th graders by local business professionals;
- Emphasis on solid academic foundations as a precursor to success;
- Show Me Scholars program pairs academic expectations with service, grade point requirements, diploma attainment, attendance, making good life choices, personal plan of study, and leadership development;
- Various incentives built into program, from small celebrations to more significant rewards (including scholarships from Missouri postsecondary institutions);
- Evaluation of Show Me Scholars has been compared with other similar state scholars programs.

The LEA has set forth some population-level desired results that align with and support the RTT-D proposal, specifically around technology to support analysis of student learning data.

- Proposed alignment and data tracking of Show Me Scholars within the MOSIS data files;

The LEA has somewhat identified how they propose to track indicators to measure each result at the aggregate and individual level, use the data to improve results for participating (especially high-need) students, and to bring the initiative strategically to scale.

- The proposal describes increased investment in order to serve participating high school students in the participating 46 districts;
- Performance measures include initial career portfolio creation, passing 5th grade reading test, passing 8th grade reading and math tests, participation based on free/reduced lunch program enrollment, participation in one internship opportunity, and demonstration of understanding of 21st century skills;
- No baseline data are presented, nor are subsequent benchmarks for the years of the grant identified.

The LEA describes the integration of education and other services for participating students.

- Career portfolio creation;
- Success on educational assessments;
- Service / internship participation.

The LEA has not set forth a plan to build staff capacity to assess student needs, identify and inventory school and community needs and assets, create a decision-making process to build and evaluate supports to address needs, and assess the progress of implementing the plan.

- This segment is unaddressed.

The LEA has not set forth a high quality plan focused specifically on their proposed competitive preference work.

Regarding identified performance measures for population level, the representation of data does not set forth ambitious and achievable goals.

- No data are included, either baseline or for the years of the grant.

The nature and description of partnerships involved in the Show Me Scholars Program provide some evidence of the LEA's efforts to increase student academic performance specifically around college attendance, but is low on specifics, and as such, merits a score in the low-middle range.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Not Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Across this proposal, primarily due to the large scale of the project, it was unclear how the LEA would build on the core assurance areas to create personalized learning environments designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators aligned with college- and career-readiness standards or graduation requirements.

The emphasis on teacher development was largely focused on broad descriptions of cultivating capacity in teachers' literacy instruction and the creation of positive school climates, with little sense of specifics about exactly how they were to do so. There was limited evidence of the level of community buy-in from each of the constituent 46 LEAs; despite their signing of MOUs there was little sense of ownership of the proposal. Across the board, the lack of specific benchmarks for student learning outcomes was a significant weakness in this proposal. There was no clear vision for how everyday classroom practices would be transformed, how individual learners' college trajectories would be initiated, or how chronically low-performing schools were to receive intervention. The proposal does not provide adequate evidence for meeting Absolute Priority 1.

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 210 | 132 |
|--------------|------------|------------|

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The optional budget supplement focuses on the expansion of the OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring Program.

- The organization has significant experience providing trained volunteer tutors ages 50+ to support K-4 grade students at risk of academic failure or in other need of support;
- The organization's work is aligned with Common Core State Standards;
- Positive relationships cultivated between volunteers and students support healthy school climate;
- OASIS approved by Contribution Center of the Social Impact Exchange, with a goal "to build the field of scaling and develop an efficient capital marketplace that provides reliable funding for scaling high-impact nonprofit initiatives;"
- Proposal addresses online tutor training modules and webinars for tutors to use with students, with prior experience in "Tutor Power;"
- Five goals are described: new tutor recruitment, additional implementation of tutoring in St. Louis area districts without tutors, additional implementation of tutoring in remaining 33 school districts, develop and pilot e-strategies for tutoring, and ensure sustainability of OASIS tutoring.

The plan is developmental and logical, and addresses a concrete timeline, identifies target activities and deliverables, and specifies roles and responsibilities. The total supplemental budget request totals \$1.9 million though an additional \$376,000 of funding from other sources is included.

The description of the optional budget supplement is concrete, clear, reasonable and scalable, and merits a high score.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0726MO-3 for Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a unique reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas: adopting new rigorous standards and assessments, building responsive, integrated data systems, recruiting, rewarding, developing and maintaining highly effective teachers and principals, and turning around low achieving schools by closing achievement gaps through literacy development. The vision focuses on accelerating reading, writing, speaking, and listening as the core strategy for enhancing student achievement. The innovation of this vision is that it is centered in "high-level literacy" coupled with a commitment to creating, modeling, and implementing consistent, cross-classroom, cross school, and cross-district supportive and positive classroom strategies for building literacy.</p> <p>The limitation of this vision is that the opening framework places relatively little emphasis on its future professional evaluation systems or its integrated data management systems. While the wide foundation of the Common Core is mentioned, there is little to suggest that linkages between literacy and climate development adequately address the content areas that prepare students to complete a rigorous, college-ready high school program. While these elements are referenced, this section would be strengthened with somewhat more detail about these components integrate the vision of literacy and climate enhancements with the broader demands of changing broad-based subject matter content, develop and use data systems for teaching, learning, and assessment, and recruit, develop, and evaluate high-quality professionals.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal is well adequately laid out, indicating specific schools, grade bands, and subject areas that will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process the applicant used to recruit and select participating schools is defined clearly. Information is provided that demonstrates that participating schools and districts collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements; • A list of the participating schools is included along with the required demographic information; and • Extensive charts detail the number and percentages of participating students who are high-need students. <p>The implementation plan does not make clear how its evaluation systems for teachers and principals will integrate the literacy and climate components of the plan. Also missing is information about how the system's integrated assessment, instructional resources, and data systems will integrate new literacy approaches and inform students, families, as well as teachers and principals of progress indicators and alert these stakeholders to individual and systemic academic needs.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes core required aspects describing LEA-level reform and change, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A theory of change demonstrating the integration of all components • A commitment to focus on healthy schools with effective school cultures and positive school climates | | |

- A commitment to focus on high-quality teaching, teachers and principals as increasingly effective leaders
- Interest in developing programs that give students a sense of belonging, competency and safety
- Using a train the trainer model

This component of the application is weakened by its limited plan for coordinating the management of a program as comprehensive and substantive as this program is expected to be. The plan discussion does not adequately detail how the reforms will be coordinated across all participating districts and schools. It is not entirely clear from the evidence presented how the various schools and their school boards, advisors, communities and partners will be coordinated and integrated. The proposed advisory groups and District and School Leadership Teams are a start, but no description is offered to detail the specifics and day-to-day operations the consortium will use to work together, communicate, assess needs, actions, and implementation, and maintain coherent, action-ready, solution-oriented systems.

These are limitations to the plan meeting the criteria of a "high-quality plan" which will both be able to implement a four-year change structure and, later, scaled up and translate the programs that are successful into meaningful reform to support district-wide change across the consortium and beyond.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
|---|----|---|

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is measuring outcomes using the State ESEA targets for each of the participating schools and LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup, in the following areas:

- Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth).
- Decreasing achievement gaps (as defined in this notice).
- Graduation rates (as defined in this notice).
- College enrollment (as defined in this notice) rates.

Data are presented in terms of scale scores, making it difficult to assess the ambitiousness of the goals. Only 2011-2012 is considered the baseline year. It is not clear why two years of data weren't provided. It appears that only reading is assessed, and there are no indications of the outcome goals for the climate components of this proposed project.

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

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 8 |

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The participating LEAs have made substantial progress on the State's accreditation program. Four years ago, fewer than half the school districts qualified for "distinction" in performance, which combines progress on State-mandated assessment tests, high school end-of course exams, graduation rates, ACT scores, and other measures. In 2011, 65 percent of districts received this State distinction.

- A chart of summary data by district demonstrates four years of advancing student learning and achievement
- More extensive charts are provided in the appendix identifying improvements
- Performance and audit data are available on the State's web site

A limitation of this presentation is that the large number of schools and districts involved are difficult to chart in an efficient manner. As a result, it is not entirely clear how the percentage improvements reported in the narrative are supported with data. A stronger case would have been made for the districts' past successes if summary figures were provided indicating differentiated achievements, by district for students in different demographic subgroups and on different assessments. This is particular important because the capacity to integrate and report large amounts of data for so many districts and schools will be needed in the implementation of RTTT.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports that data for each district is available on the state website and that the state is committed to increased openness in government, as stated by laws referenced. Included in the information reported about LEAs is financial and achievement information in the form of a public report card. The scope of the required state audit is summarized.

This component of the application would have been strengthened by improved reporting strategies that allowed for summarizing key information required for this grant application. Data are reported as available but the key information requested for this criterion (e.g., actual personnel salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff; actual personnel salaries for different categories of staff; and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school levels) were not reported within the application itself.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
|---|----|---|

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides information that summarizes certain conditions and autonomy that are available to the district under recent State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. Additional advancements are promised in future state-level policy making regarding flexibility in awarding academic credit, publication of grade-level expectations for various subjects, and future end-of-course tests.

This section would have been strengthened if it provided specific examples of how the current and future requirements and flexibilities advance the personalized learning environments and reforms described in the applicant's proposal. As it stands, it is not clear how or what State or local policies support the proposed innovations in this application.

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 3 |
|---|----|---|

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant candidly explains challenges its consortium faced in recruiting districts for this project. Nevertheless, it succeeded in building a constituency for the project among 67 of its districts. Districts' commitments are demonstrated in the letters of support and the MOUs that are included in the appendix.

This component of the application would have been strengthened by including:

- A description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and how feedback was solicited and used;
- The status of collective bargaining in the districts and an explanation of how teachers and principals were represented in the planning and drafting of the proposal;
- A summary and/or table that details the nature of partners' engagement and the range of partnerships that have committed to supporting the project collectively and at individual school and district levels.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
|--|---|---|

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Summary statements provide broad evidence for the needs and gaps in achievements in the districts and schools within the participating consortia. The planning for the application's development used district-level teams of school personnel meeting within consortium groups to define needs and achieve consensus on the proposed application's core goals.

The application does not include an in-depth and high-quality plan for analyzing current status in implementing personalized learning environments across all of its participating districts. The logic behind the proposal development and the resulting application is not spelled out in depth. Charts and graphs presented as supportive evidence for this criteria share the weaknesses cited in the earlier evaluation sections. In brief, the methodology of summarizing and presenting outcome data and impact evidence is more limited than it should be to make the strongest possible case that members of the consortia are adequately prepared to conduct the data analyses, tracking, and, ultimately, to implement proposed reforms systematically and intensively.

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

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 5 |
| <p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section reiterates the vision of how educators will nurture literacy and climate, suggesting the use of service learning and strategies for students to assess their own interests and pursue their learning through those interests. Several of these goals are also aligned with several of the State standards.</p> <p>Strengths of this component include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on classroom climate and engaging students in self-directed learning • Accommodating students with special needs • Individually defined and "personalized" learning (although examples of these strategies are vague) • Aligning goals with State standards • Service learning as a means for deepening students' engagement • An implementation plan is charted, outlining the goals, implementation activities, and person(s) responsible for activities, and broadly described student outcomes <p>This component of the application is very much lacking specific, research-based and high-quality implementation strategy with specifics about what teachers and school leaders will do differently in their classrooms to improve learning and teaching. Using a personal interest inventory and a broad use of technology may be pieces of a broader puzzle but these isolated items do not constitute a systematic, high-quality plan with focused implementation objectives, targeted audiences, responsible leaders, and time lines. The plan provided here is a fine conceptual approach to literacy, but nothing in the narrative makes clear what will be done differently in classrooms and by the district that will move beyond generalizations and ensure that students are literacy-ready to take ambitious high school courses that prepare them to graduate from college- and be career-ready. Missing elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information is provided about involving parents in the learning process; • Specific alignments between project goals and college- and career-ready standards are not demonstrated; • Connections to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives as a motivating resource are limited; • It is unclear exactly how the project will accomplish the goals of ensuring students of all ages, learning styles, and in all courses (K-12) will develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving; • Details are missing about how ongoing and regular feedback that will be provided to ensure students are progressing toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements; and • The mechanisms for providing students with training and support to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources are not spelled out. | | |

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 5 |
|---|----|---|

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to develop and implement a "professional learning curriculum" for all teachers and districts. The curriculum will be designed to "create a positive school climate and culture" and help teachers teach literacy across the curriculum in all grades and subject areas.</p> <p>The teaching and learning model the applications will be put in place in districts and schools uses established but traditional models of coaching, paired leadership models, district- and school-level oversight leadership teams, monitors, mentors, and commitments to continuous improvements.</p> <p>The application indicates that participating school leaders and school leadership teams will receive training, tools, data, and resources enabling them to structure effective learning environments so that students' individual academic needs are met. The plan stated promised to accelerate student progress through common and individual tasks and to institute policies and procedures that include an upgraded professional evaluation system for both teachers and principals.</p> <p>While the MOUs included in the application commit to instituting teacher and principal evaluation systems, this section does not provide necessary details showing how the evaluation systems will be developed, coordinated, and implemented across more than 40 participating districts.</p> <p>Proposed training, systems, and practices appear to be consistent with established practice but do not suggest particular innovations to take districts beyond the status quo.</p> <p>Limitations of this description include the following:</p> | | |
|---|--|--|

- The timelines, activities, and outcomes chart suggests isolated activities without specifics about how the activities link to measureable outcomes.
- Outcomes and measures that are suggested are not evidence-based; outcomes are vague statements without specific measuring strategies. For example, "student voice is represented" or "student needs analyzed in baseline literacy assessment," but missing are the definitions of "student voice," the measuring strategy, and which "baseline literacy assessments" will be used.
- The logic model presented in this section, ironically, does not put the student at its center. Instead, the student floats at the top of a four point rectangular structure which fails to link teachers and district leaders directly to each other and to students and fails to link school leadership teams directly to student outcomes.
- A Learning Management System is to be the basis of the professional learning plan. This program, called MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), has been under development by the consortium but there is no evidence that it has been evaluated against best-practice standards, so it is not clear if this system has a prior track record of accomplishing the ambitious goals set for it. How the system functions in the classroom is also not detailed adequately.

In brief, intentions are good but the text does not lay out a "high quality plan" with adequate specifics and oversight across a complex set of schools and districts. The ambitious ideas (such as personalized learning, teachers as coaches and leaders, internship opportunities; technology literacy; "Show Me" goals; and Academic and Career Portfolios are big ideas which are not sufficiently flushed out with examples to make the plan convincing:

The proposed data system and tools for participating educators, students and families to use to accelerate student progress is unspecified; there does not seem to be actionable information to help educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests; high-quality learning resources (e.g., instructional content and assessments), including digital resources, as appropriate, are not shown to be aligned with college- and career-ready standards; the match between processes and tools across the learning and teaching criteria are not explicit.

Notwithstanding the plans for using professional leadership teams at multiple levels, there is no clearly defined high-quality plan or goals for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 7 |

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The lead organization, Cooperating School Districts of Greater St Louis, Inc. is a long-established professional development and training organization that has served the region for more than 80 years. In 2012, it is staffed with 50 full-time professionals and operates like an LEA.

The applicant states that it has practices, policies, and rules in place that include:

- An LEA-like central office and consortium governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools;
- District-level and school-level leadership teams (SLT) that include each district's superintendent, lead teachers, data managers, and instructional coaches;
- Local SLTs will have flexibility and autonomy over "critical grant areas" including school schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, staffing models, school-level budgets and roles and responsibilities of personnel.
- Students will have access to on-line courses that provide alternate credit-earning routes and alternatives will be in place that enable coaches and SLTs to help students use those routes to demonstrate mastery through alternate means, as needed;
- Currently available staff support teachers in working with special needs students and these models will be enhanced and expanded if the RTTT grant it implemented.

Even with these statements and assurances, the narrative does not demonstrate how the proposed strategies will be organized, managed, led, coordinated, and implemented to achieve the grant goals. The description provided makes it appear that the proposed procedures expand current practices slightly but it is not evident about how those practices are significantly enhanced, extended, or carrier out with a new level of intensity and substantive richness.

One confusion in the application is how many school districts are actually involved in the implementation in this project. In one place the number is 46, in another the number is 44. Because of the complex management structure that is necessary when so many districts with varied needs are served, this application would have been strengthened by details, timelines, procedures, management flow charts, examples of task and task structures that demonstrate how new systems will build on and improve upon old systems that have long been in place.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the application demonstrates that newly funded programs will be built on existing systems which have some features of the requirements within this criterion, including:

- Participating constituents (including students, educators, managers, and etc. stakeholders) will have access to content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal;
- Appropriate levels of technical support are expected to be provided through a range of strategies (e.g., peer support, online support, or local support);
- Future information technology systems that will allow parents and students to export their information in an open data formats and to use the data in other electronic learning systems (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records); and
- LEAs and schools currently have the capacity to use interoperable data systems.

This section of the application is characterized by the same kinds of weaknesses as described above. In general:

- The narrative does not demonstrate how the proposed strategies will be organized, managed, led, coordinated, and implemented to achieve the grant goals.
- It is not entirely clear what new practices will be implemented and how they will be put in place;
- New levels of program intensity and substantive richness are proposed without adequate detail to judge the quality of the planning, the promise of the strategy, or the mechanisms for ensuring implementation efficiency and responsiveness to the numerous constituents the project will seek to reach.

Most important, expanded data systems are anticipated that will link with current statewide data systems and plans include collecting end-of-course data, attendance rates, and free- and reduced- lunch data. However, these resources are anticipated and do not currently exist. Similarly, periodic reports to various constituencies are envisioned but they do not yet exist, even in pilot forms. The missing link here is that these are complex systems when they work efficiently and well.

Apparently there is no current plan with adequate details about how these systems will be developed and expanded at all levels of the organizational structure. Without solid evidence of this nature, it is not possible to assess if the promised systems provide responsive data dash boards that will inform instruction, planning, and evaluation. Similarly, there is no evidence presented that there will be adequate levels of data transparency to stakeholders (including students and families, educators, evaluators, and community interest groups) adequate informed of educational progress, needs, and opportunities.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 5 |

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a plan that will provide the participating LEAs the local flexibility they need to implement the programs according to expectations within each of their communities and schools. The plan states that the district and school team leaders will support the integration of the local progress assessments with those included in the State system. A Project Advisory Board, which will include Project-level team members, district-level stakeholders, teacher organizations and individual teachers, and parent representatives.

Measurement strategies will support rather than add to local formative and benchmark assessments.

The existing Missouri Student Data System (MOSIS) is expected to provide "real time student, educator, school, and district-level data to support the overall measurement of success." According to the application MOSIS "allows schools to report in timed intervals, enrollment, testing, and educator preparation and student performance.

Although claims are made for existing systems that track continuous improvement in a timely manner, no examples were

provided of these systems at work. More information is called for to demonstrate how the information system is currently used, what the data dashboard looks like and how it functions (including information about reporting frequency, substance, modified reports for specific constituencies, etc.).

A needed addition to this application are specific examples of measures, reports, means that SLT and DLT will be entering and pulling the data from the system for use in adjusting classroom practices according to identified needs. Absent such clear examples, it is challenging to imagine how these systems look, what ensures that they are efficient and not cumbersome, and how teaching teams will coordinate the data to be collected during the life of the program.

While flexibility and responsiveness to individual communities is important, there is a concern that the use of different and contrasting measuring tools, strategies, and on different timelines will make it very difficult to collect consistent and informative data. The applicant does not address how these potential inconsistencies will be addressed.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Stakeholder driven planning processes and advisory structures are said to be in place. Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders include an advisory board structures whose school-level teams are represented by the District and School-level leaders. These teams are responsible for monitoring program implementation and effectiveness. The applicant indicates an intention to create classroom observations, checklists, and protocols for monitoring, but these resources do not yet exist.

This very brief outline points in to the correct direction for LEA-level monitoring. Although a broad structure is defined, it is not clear how the communication and engagement structure will be implemented. If tools are to be developed in the future, it will be necessary to coordinate these tools and their selection across districts. Since it appears that 44 to 46 LEAs will be designing or adapting unique tools, the proposed plan needed a description of how data from these various instruments will be aggregated, analyzed, and how feedback will be used to report results and guide improvements that are indicated.

As indicated in the previous criterion, flexibility and responsiveness to individual communities is important, but the applicant should be concerned that the use of different and contrasting measuring tools, strategies, and on different timelines will make it very difficult to collect consistent and informative data. The applicant does not address how these potential inconsistencies will be addressed.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
|--|---|---|

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Missouri is in the early stages of developing methodologies and technologies for collecting and reporting the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teachers or principals are effective or highly effective. Also, Missouri is in the process of developing a new educator evaluation system which is expected to be adopted in 2013. The performance measures and indicators proposed for this project will follow those recommended and used statewide, with the proviso that individual districts have the flexibility and authority to develop and adapt their own systems.

The applicant is appreciated for working with its State and district to support the evolving statewide movement toward modernized standards-linked, and assessment-linked professional evaluation systems. However, the fact that these systems are so far from implementation and that no alternate consistent plan is proposed in the application can expected to seriously challenge the implementation of this ambitious project.

Until systems are in place that pilot test, analyze and put to work stated performance measures, it is difficult to predict if the measurement process will work as expected, and most importantly, if it will produce actionable data that meets the standard of this criterion.

For this section to be as strong as it should be, additional evidence and narrative could have provided

- The rationale for selecting all performance measure;
- Indications of how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative instructional information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action; and
- Information about how the applicant will review and improve the measures over time that will gage implementation progress.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
|---|---|---|

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to conduct formative and continuous assessments of its two core goals: (1) the extent to which students are on track toward literacy proficiency and (2) the benefits of implementing a constructive teaching culture and climate that supports learning.

The assessment plans include the development and use of teacher-made in-class tests, whose results are maintained on local management information systems for continuing teacher and leadership use. This combination of teacher-made tests will eventually be integrated into a system-wide teacher-made formative assessment system.

The project team will also measure school climate and culture through on-line surveys completed by parents, staff, and students. Although these surveys are unnamed in the text, the applicant claims that have been validated and they will continue to be re-validated.

Together the school-by-school literacy assessments and the school surveys of culture and climate will be used to monitor school progress, disaggregated by demographic subgroup.

Other progress measures that will be evaluated include (1) assessing student social and emotional development with a student behavior analysis, students' progress toward college and career readiness as indicated on pass rates on the State's Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Other program performance measures include (1) overall student literacy; (2) high school graduation rates; students' success in entering the work force after high school or post-secondary education, and (4) character development as measured by social/emotional behavior surveys. Other success indicators that will be measured include student success in post-secondary careers and education programs, use of students' interest and aptitude measures (ASVB), and percent of FAFSA applications that are completed and submitted.

This applicant is trying to create an evaluation system for measuring program implementation and impact, but, because it's evaluation capacity is significantly limited by the inadequate interactive State or local student data system that is linked to teachers, principals, and school. Vital analyses that help the project meet the core assumptions of this legislation cannot be connected without the most modern interactive data system using the highest quality formative, summative, and nationally and internationally-benchmarked assessments.

The applicant has proposed a multi-component strategy for evaluating the project's implementation and outcomes and the need for continued changes. However, its evaluation plan is compromised by the absence of a coherent State monitoring and data integration system. Although the proposed evaluation design elements make sense, the whole plan for continuing program assessment is not as clear and high-quality as it might be. Furthermore, no plans are laid out for identifying external evaluation expertise to conduct the continuing evaluation.

To summarize: The applicant proposes a number of strategies for evaluating its core programs. But these strategies will be limited in their capacity to objectively assess with sophisticated assessment tools how well the project is implementing core RTTT components, including (1) sophisticated curriculum- and assessment-based technology, more productively used time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and how these strategies are supporting community partners, compensation reform, and school-level schedule and course modification and decision- making structures .

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 5 |

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget narrative and tables propose a four-year program budget for the two primary core projects, the Show Me Literacy project and he Positive Climate project. There is no evidence that additional matched funds have been identified to support the project going forward.

Cost figures are provided that describe each cost element, establish the cost assumptions, and detail the annual costs. The final budget delineates projected expenditures in all allowable cost categories.

The total budget assumes only Race To The Top Funds, and supplementary budget funds from the Federal RTTT program, but no supplemental sources from other potential supporters (e.g., external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds). The budget appears reasonable, but without additional matched resources, it is probably insufficient to build and sustain the ambitious effort proposed.

The budget also does not unambiguously identify what funds will be used for one-time investments in comparison with those that will be used for ongoing operational costs incurred during and after the grant period. Although there are indicators within the text of some one-time expenditures, it is difficult to assess these important distinctions.

Finally, the budget is also unclear about what resources are anticipated to ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

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

10

3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project's sustainability funding is undeveloped. There is a commitment to informing partners and State-level supporters of the project's need, and to encourage their contribution to the future thinking and planning about sustainability. However, there is not a plan that demonstrates how the project will generate the continuing collaborative and financial support or definite commitments of future resource streams.

The applicant demonstrates understanding of the type of partnership they will need -- ideas about future "commitment, leadership, and funding," but the specifics about ensuring these elements are not included.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 2 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes several plans and budgets that integrate resources in partnership with the proposed overall RTTT program. These supplemental elements proposal to work with three supplemental service providers: Oasis Tutoring; Parents As Teachers (PAT); and Wyman's Teen Outreach Program. Supplemental program descriptions, evidence of prior program success, and detailed budgets are included in the application. For these programs, that applicant has included:

- Program descriptions;
- Targeted population groups to be served in the LEAs
- Descriptions of how the partnerships will work with their target communities and will track their results.

While all of these components would seem to be good fits with the broader RTTT application, the following additional information and program evidence would strengthen support for this supplemental funding:

- (1) Additional evidence is needed to demonstrate how the partnership will be formed and sustained across all of the LEAs;
- (2) Specific relevant outcome measures do not appear to be available to track progress, make mid-course corrections, or assess outcomes. The evaluation results will be limited by the undeveloped status of the State's assessment system (e.g., there is a mismatch of measures and outcomes; apparently only limited data are available for subgroup reporting; a flexible, networked data system for personalizing and reporting outcomes is not yet established sufficiently to enable outcome reporting).
- (3) It is not clear from the supplemental sections of the application how proposed supplementary programs will:
 - Track indicators and measure results at the aggregate level for all children within consortium and at the student level;
 - Use the data to target its resources toward program improvement for students facing significant challenges;
 - Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond participating students;
 - Improve results over time; and
 - Work within participating schools to integrate education and other services (e.g., services that address social-emotional, and behavioral needs, acculturation for immigrants and refugees) for participating students.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Not Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This applicant has a strong vision of providing literacy support and professional development to its service community. However, to meet this absolutely priority, the applicant was required to "coherently and comprehensively" demonstrate how it's future systems will address the grant's four core educational assurance areas.

This applicant's vision is too narrow to meet this ambitious requirement of comprehensiveness and it is insufficiently detailed or expansive to "coherently" demonstrate how the two-pronged vision of literacy development and building a supportive climate, along will achieve the high standard of "significantly improving learning and teaching" to prepare students to graduate from high school college- and career-ready. While this might be a strong and engaging literacy program and while educators might well become more mutually supportive and creative in their support of students and of one another, the plan presented does not include the systemic tools that will be so necessary to change curriculum content, re-frame professional evaluation systems so that the highest quality of professionals are recruited, and engage the community more fully and knowledgeably in the Common Core State Standards-based teaching.

The evidence is missing that demonstrates how the many communities served by these schools and districts are part of the solution and are more fully involved in student learning all day and all year. Also, and most seriously, it is not clear what specific measurements (e.g., what specific assessments, curriculums, resources) exist or are planned to be the foundation of this program and how these systems will be integrated within a comprehensive data and reporting dash board. Finally, there is no strong link between evidence-based research and the program elements proposed. These are "motherhood and apple pie" innovations which all professionals can applaud and support. The "devil is in the details" and without those details itemized and considered, the applicant fails to make a convincing case for a comprehensive change initiative that reaches the "high quality" standard that is mandated in this grant competition.

| | | |
|-------|-----|----|
| Total | 210 | 83 |
|-------|-----|----|

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 8 |

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The optional budget supplements describe the three proposed supplementary programs that comprise the Competitive Preference Priority. The budget supplements generally included the basic required information.

However, as described above (under Competitive Preference Priority), the proposals did not include robust measures of student status and growth, they did not propose nuanced methods of assessing hard-to-measure skills and traits, and they did not define a comprehensive evaluation strategy. The programs include evaluation plans, but these plans do not provide adequate evidence of how the programs will develop, monitor, or evaluate the continuous improvement of personalized learning experiences, tools, or resources that will be used in the implementation.

A central tripping point in this section, as in other sections, is that it is also not clear how these potentially innovative programs will work across the entire consortium of 44-46 schools, within different different, with different resources, communities, and supports to serve students with such varied educational and social support needs.