Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0239IL-1 for East Richland CUSD #1

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Consortium districts are three of the 35 Illinois Race to the Top districts and are participating in the state led PARCC assessments.

2. The three LEAs plan to draw on their individual strengths and resources in a collective way to achieve a level of educational reform not likely in a small isolated school district.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited information reveals how/if the consortium vision builds on the previous work of the three LEAs in the four core educational assurance areas. For example, it is unclear that further development of local induction and mentoring programs will strengthen new teachers and principals in schools where they are needed most.

2. No evidence (example) is articulated that reveals how a strength or resource in one LEA might support the consortium vision in another LEA.

3. No evidence reveals how student academic interests might have influenced the project's vision.

The evidence merits a score in the middle point range because insufficient information is presented that reveals how the consortium's vision builds on the previous work of the three LEAs in the four core educational assurance areas and how unique strengths of individual LEAs and their needs of students contribute to the consortium vision.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Project implementation is influenced by a feasibility study that examines reorganization of two school districts in one county and need subsequent need to leverage collective resources.

2. Project implementation targets all schools, educators and students in the three districts.

3. Data reveal the context for the schools, their communities, and student populations—an area of increasing poverty or other risk factors for children. For example, teen parents at ERHS has increased substantially from 5 to 20 students over a 3-year period.

Weaknesses:

1. Inadequate information exists to understand how differences in leadership policies and practices among the districts and schools will impact a consortium led ed reform effort. No evidence is presented that illustrates how and with what results these same districts and the private elementary school have collaborated previously.

The evidence merits a score in the upper middle point range because insufficient information is presented that explains how differences in leadership policies and practices among the LEAs and schools will impact project implementation, particularly since no information describes how and with what results these same districts and the private elementary school have collaborated previously.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Consortium reform effort embraces state RTTT and adds a nationally recognized model as its “logic model” approach (Daggett System for Effective Instruction).

2. A management plan describes the objectives, activities, performance measures, responsible parties, outcomes and timelines for each project goal.

Weaknesses:

1. No logic model or theory of change was presented that revealed how project inputs, activities, and outputs lead to desired outcomes and impact. A project management plan was inappropriately labeled the consortium logic model in the Appendix.

2. The plan is ambitious and includes the adoption of several well-recognized models or practices. Achievability however is heavily dependent on several anticipated influences, such as (a) state success with its RTTT initiative and(b) high reliance on unsustainable resources for personnel considered necessary to support a change-oriented environment in schools (e.g., project director, administrative assistants, site coordinators, instructional coaches, data coaches, certified and non-certified professionals, social workers, parent liaisons, behavioral interventionists, truancy officers, nurses, and other personnel). It is unclear how all the models and practices that are noted fit together in a consortium-led project that seeks to support change in 3 separate LEAs and their schools. There is limited evidence of how the changes fit with current school improvement or educational plans. In essence, details are lacking to explain how districts propose to build a viable continuum of services that will be in place where children, faculty, and parents can receive services across many areas.

The evidence merits a score in the middle point range because the logic model does not present a theory of change that reveals how project inputs, activities, and outputs lead to desired outcomes and impact. The labeled logic model more accurately describes a project management plan. Although the plan is ambitious and includes the adoption of several well-recognized school improvement elements, achievability is heavily dependent on several anticipated influences, such as (a) state success with its RTTT initiative and (b) high reliance on unsustainable resources for personnel considered necessary to support a change-oriented environment in schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Project impact is expected to consistently improve student performance s measured by growth in reading and math achievement over the duration of the project, close important achievement gaps, improve graduation rates, and advance college going beyond what is customary in a high poverty rural context.

Weaknesses:

1. Inadequate information is presented as a rational to explain the anticipated 15% drop in scores for SY2013-14 when new state standards and assessments are implemented,including how the envisioned project might reduce this expectation.

2. No information is presented that reveals a comparison of the performance of each LEA with the state average on the ISAT and PSAE previously to gauge if a 5% growth per year is appropriate, or a rationale as to why the same effect (i.e., 5% growth) is appropriate in each LEA, or why this rate of growth is expected to be the same in both math and reading.

3. Although project implementation with a focus on creating personalized learning environments for each student is projected to close achievement gaps, after 4 years of the project (SY 2012-16) and $10mil, no LEA average is expected to exceed the state minimum target for overall performance of students in reading or math, and the gap for economically disadvantaged students remains below the state minimum target.

4. It is unclear why the anticipated graduation rate for West Richland HS is expected to be less for disadvantaged students in SY 2012-16 than the 5-year rate in SY2011-12, although this may be because of the low no. of students in the high school.

The evidence merits a score in the upper middle point range because no information is presented that reveals a comparison of the performance of each LEA with the state average on the ISAT and PSAE previously to gauge if a 5% growth per year is appropriate, or explains why the same effect (i.e., 5% growth) is appropriate in each LEA, or why this rate of growth is expected to be the same in both math and reading. Additionally, no LEA average is expected to exceed the state minimum target for overall performance of students in reading or math at the end of the project, and the gap for economically disadvantaged students remains below the state minimum target.

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**	**5**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Strong evidence reveals the 3 LEAs have implemented numerous grant-funded school improvements projects that could have laid an essential foundation for the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

1. No data is presented from internal or external evaluation of the numerous projects previously implemented in the LEAs to substantiate success of their implementation or achievement of intended outcomes such as impact on teaching and learning.

2. It is unclear how individual schools within the 3 LEAs that might have been low-performing were positively impacted (e.g., improved school culture, changed instructional strategies, higher student achievement in reading/math, more engaged parents/family/community).

3. Although a Specialized Data Systems is noted in a project implemented by the Wabash LEA, information on how the LEAs and/or schools made student performance data available to students, educators and parents that informed and improved participation, instruction or services for any stakeholders.

The evidence merits a score in the lower middle point range because no data is presented from internal or external evaluation of the numerous projects previously implemented in the LEAs to substantiate success of their implementation or achievement of intended outcomes such as impact on teaching and learning. Moreover, insufficient information explains how the LEAs and/or schools made student performance data available to students, educators and parents that informed and improved participation, instruction or services for any stakeholders.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. The fiscal agent and other LEAs in the consortium maintain financial data systems and follow appropriate state law in complying with audit and other reporting requirements.

Weaknesses:

1. The description is vague regarding the extent to which the LEAs or fiscal agent LEA makes personnel salaries and school level expenditures public. It Is unclear that such information is published in the local newspaper or released to the public in ways that make the information known by a large percentage of the public as compared to simply making the information available in the district office. Specifics regarding personnel salaries and school level expenditures released at board meetings and news releases are not described.

The evidence merits a score in the low point range because information on personnel and school level expenditures are not released in ways that inform the public but rather meet minimum state compliance requirements for making the information available if a person wants to make the effort to retrieve it.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. The LEAs plan to cooperate fully with ISBE on data collections for the longitudinal data system and collaborate to build local capacity to use education research to reform local capacity.

2. Numerous examples reveal how the LEAs will develop personalized learning environments for students.

Weaknesses:

1. Information is vague regarding how policies and procedures in each LEA will support schools through governance, provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as having input into school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non -educators, and school-level budgets.

2. No evidence reveals if/how LEAs have autonomy in law or policy for linking individual educator (i.e., teacher, principal, superintendent) evaluation or improvement with student performance data.

The evidence merits a score in the middle point range because inadequate information demonstrates how specific policies and procedures in each LEA will support schools through governance, provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy, or link individual educator (i.e., teacher, principal, superintendent) evaluation or improvement with student performance data and needs.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Numerous representatives of stakeholder groups provided letters of support for the proposal.

Weaknesses:

1. Information is lacking that reveals how students, parents/families were engaged in a formal process to develop the proposal.

2. It is unclear how documenting input of stakeholders contributed to relevant components of the project plan, as the description says input of stakeholders will ultimately result in a higher level of engagement. For example, it is unclear how the Richland County Leadership Group was able to provide input during project planning or how recommendations from this group and the Wabash County Project Success Coalition were incorporated into decisions regarding proposal contents.

The evidence merits a score in the middle point range because insufficient information explains how students and their parents/families were engaged in a formal process to develop the proposal, or how documenting input of stakeholders contributed to relevant components of the project plan.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Schools realized the need to increase the rigor and relevance of their curriculum to effectively align instruction to the Common Core State Standards and to create an effective school reform model by which this change can occur. It was determined that the model that will be adopted to facilitate school reform should be The Daggett System for Effective Instruction created by Bill Daggett and The International Center of Leadership in Education.

Weaknesses:

1. Specific needs of students are not described for each school in the project, and therefore, it is unclear why schools decided an increase in curriculum rigor and relevance, and a new school reform model, was warranted, particularly why all schools in the 3 LEAs need the same model offered by The International Center of Leadership in Education.

2. Limited information reveals what components of a personalized learning environment currently exists in the schools for students and educators and how the proposed plan fills gaps in desired components. Therefore, it is unclear how the needs analysis process enabled decisionmakers to consider numerous reform models or best practices for addressing a gap in programs, practices or services needed to create a more desirable personalized learning environment for students and educators.

The evidence merits a score in the low point range because inadequate information reveals what components of a personalized learning environment currently exists in the schools for students and educators and how the proposed plan fills gaps in desired components as recommended by a broad group of educators, parents and community stakeholders.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**8**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Students will be provided project based learning opportunities that are aligned with common core standards as a strategy to increase student engagement in learning.

2. Additional dual credit classes will be developed and more early college class opportunities will be offered to ensure that curriculum is linked to college- and career-ready standards.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how ongoing communication with families will support their students in knowing what they are learning is key to their personal success in accomplishing goals.

2. Insufficient information describes how students will understand they are involved in deep learning experiences in their areas of academic interest.

3. Descriptions in sections (a and (b) provide vague statements that inadequately explain the what or how. For example, it is unclear if each student will have a personal educational plan with essential supports, as no process is provided that ensures this will happen and how it will happen for each student, particularly for high need students. For example, the following statements in the proposal are vague and lacks specifics: “Educational opportunities will be provided through

interdisciplinary instruction that will increase the students understanding of real world interconnectedness." Or "All students will be provided support from parents and educators regarding their chosen goals." Specifics are lacking that explain how the programs or services like school schedules and student groups will meet needs of students at different levels for creating a high quality instructional environment (e.g., birth compared to preschool or elementary, or middle school, or high school and how they could or should be different in schools of the different LEAs).This would explain a statement such as "A continuum of opportunities and resources will be available for students and their families."

4. It is unclear what support will ensure that all families and students will understand how to use all the tools and resources provided in order to track and manage their learning. Statements are vague about what digital content and related resources will be available, and if all students and families in this high poverty rural context have access to Internet at home.

5. It is unclear how the following planned activities will be available to assist students in completing their goals in the different LEAs: vocational training, digital courses, summer school programs; Explore, Plan, ISAT and PSAE preparation classes; and credit recovery classes.

The evidence merits a score in the middle point range because insufficient information reveals how ongoing communication with families will support students in knowing what they are learning is necessary to accomplish personal goals, or how students will understand reasons for involvement in deep learning experiences, or how to use all the tools and resources provided in order to track and manage their own learning. Moreover, information is inadequate to know how planned activities accommodate differences in student goals and needs among the 3 LEAs, such as vocational training; digital courses; summer school programs; Explore, Plan, ISAT and PSAE preparation classes; and credit recovery classes.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**8**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Strategies include frequently monitoring of student performance and offering a variety of additional assistance to accelerate student achievement.

2. A professional learning community team with appropriate representation is to lead improvements in each school of the 3 LEAs in the consortium.

Weaknesses:

1. It is contradictory to indicate the project is to provide a personalized learning environment based on student needs with appropriate supports and also state "With a goal of 100% proficiency, the personalized learning environments must be implemented even for those students who are resisting requirements imposed on them to prevent failure."

2. The description in section (C) (2) (a) does not reveal the training all participating educators will engage in that supports their individual and collective capacity to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments, to adapt content and instruction to meet students' academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches, to frequently measure student progress, or to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems. For example, it is unclear how teachers, tutoring by teachers, peer tutors, and study buddies are to be trained to effectively provide one on one assistance and additional in-school assistance that aligns with student needs; or how those performing monitoring, reviews and feedback are to gain such skills to implement the strategies noted.

3. Specific timelines are not provided for essential training events outlined in the project plan in Appendix A. For example, no timelines or schedule is presented for when educators will complete training on the Daggett System for Effective Instruction, the Langford Quality Learning or Project Lead the Way STEM components, or professional development on using project-based learning in instruction. Moreover, it is unclear how the evaluation systems of teachers and principals are to influence feedback for improvements that can impact personalized learning environments and strategies offered students during early project implementation when the plan reveals 2016 is the date 90% of teachers and 100% of principals will receive a performance rating under the new evaluation system.

4. No information reveals how the consortium project planners used previously identified needs of students in the schools of the 3 LEAs to design a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and areas such as special education. It is insufficient that the districts' plan to create such a plan at some future date.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because insufficient information explains the training or timelines all participating educators will engage in that supports their individual and collective capacity to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments; to adapt content and instruction to meet students' academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches; to frequently measure student progress; or to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**6**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. A MOU defines how the 3 LEAS will collaborate to govern the project.

2. Students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards through dual credit courses at the high schools, through early admissions dual enrollment at local colleges, and through vocational experiences, job shadowing and mentoring, credit recovery courses, summer school programs, and advanced placement classes as educators become qualified to offer such classes.

Weaknesses:

1. The Executive Board of the consortium is comprised only of superintendents with other important stakeholders such as role-specific representatives of school board members, principals, teachers, parents, students, and community organizations, not included on this important decision-making body or designated in a consortium leadership advisory capacity to guide project implementation and improvement.

2. It is unclear what specific school board policies in each LEA currently provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, and school-level budgets.

3. It is unclear what specific school board policies in each LEA are being implemented currently to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery rather than the amount of time spent on a topic.

4. It is unclear how learning resources and instructional practices under the consortium's control will be fully accessible to all students in each school of the 3 LEAs.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because It is unclear what specific school board policies in each LEA currently provide schools and educators with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, and school-level budgets. Moreover, representation on the consortium executive board, or an advisory group, does not include many of the stakeholders who will be essential for successful project implementation and impact.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Training will be provided to the students, families, and educators on accessing the data system to review each student's personal plan.

2. The districts will fully cooperate with the ISBE and Department of Education data collections and enter into data sharing agreements with the state research collaboration effort to use educational research in project implementation.

3. East Richland CUSD #1, the consortium's lead LEA, has upgraded its previous data system to a web-based information data base that is interoperable and will incorporate features on students' demographic information, classroom grades, human resources data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

Weaknesses:

1. Given the percentage of participating students from low-income families is much higher in some schools compared to other schools in the consortium's 3 LEAs, it is unclear how the consortium ensures lowest-income or isolated families are to receive services that give them equal capacity to participate in the project (e.g., computer availability in home and or home Internet access in remote rural areas to access learning resources for managing student's personalized education plan, for receiving online support, or for accessing data and information from the project's website).

2. It is unclear how the consortium will offer technical support staff, services, or educator training opportunities to each LEA based on current capacity available and need.

3. No timelines are provided to indicate, for example, when information technology and data systems will be in place to support project initiatives in all schools.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because insufficient information explains how the consortium will offer technical support staff, services, or educator training opportunities to each LEA based on current capacity available and need. Also, all student participants and their families may not have equal access to learning opportunities and supports in the lowest-income or most isolated families who have no computers or Internet access in the home.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**6**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. The consortium incorporates the state's comprehensive continuous improvement process, Rising Star, into the project's continuous improvement process.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear if and when any of the information collected from the state's Rising Star program and the local project evaluation activities are reported in a timely manner to the consortium board and school leadership teams for use in making decisions that specifically address improvements needed in the project's activities or outcomes.

2. No information is presented that reveals how results of the continuous improvement process and local evaluation are shared with the public to reveal quality of RTT-District investments in professional development, technology, and staff in each LEA.

3. It is unclear how each LEA will use capacity created from the project's continuum improvement process to improve personalized learning environments after the grant funds end.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because the weaknesses noted substantially hinder implementation of an effective continuous improvement process, particularly if information collected from the state's Rising Star program and the local project evaluation activities are not reported in a timely manner to the consortium board and school leadership teams for use in making decisions.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant leverages Rising Star program to maintain ongoing communication and engagement with project leadership.

Weaknesses:

1. It is confusing or unclear as to why the continuous improvement process is to be updated as each of the project grant activities are completed. It is odd that the consortium's process would change but rather the information collected by the process would change with each data collection activity.

2. It is confusing and vague as to how this consortium project plans to provide ongoing communications and engagement with key stakeholders specifically for the purpose of improving project implementation and achieving intended outcomes of a personalized learning environment, as compared to the state continuous improvement process that appears to focus on a general process for documenting school improvement in an LEA.

The evidence merits a score in the upper middle point range because It is somewhat confusing and vague as to how this consortium project plans to provide ongoing communications and engagement with key stakeholders specifically for the purpose of improving project implementation and achieving intended outcomes of a personalized learning environment, as compared to the state continuous improvement process that appears to focus on a general process for documenting school improvement in an LEA.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Measures are clearly stated with timelines of expected outcomes in Appendix A that align with project objectives and activities.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited information is provided on numerous measures that explain the rationale for selecting the measure as a valuable measure for one or more project components.

2. No information explains why the targets for the proposed matrix that will measure characteristics related to successful school completion & career readiness (e.g., socioeconomic factors, school challenges, behavioral issues, family mobility, early parenthood) could not be determined.

3. It is unclear if a credible process will be used to monitor the reliability and validity of its chosen measures and how those found unsatisfactory will be amended, replaced, or eliminated to fit the changing needs of students.

4. Reading and math targets for % of students with highly effective teachers/principal or effective teachers/principal by the post-grant period is less ambitious than should be warranted by the applicant's description of the quality of the professional development and other supports to be provided teachers/principals to meet the individual personalized learning needs of participating students in the schools (i.e., all students).

5. College ready targets for % of students who are on track to college & career readiness by the post-grant period, as measured by 9th, 10th, and 11th grade reading and math assessment (i.e., EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT) is less ambitious than should be warranted by the applicant's description of the quality of the professional development and other supports to be provided educators and families to meet the individual personalized learning needs of participating students in the schools (i.e., all students).

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because of less ambitious career readiness targets, reading and math targets, and lack of a formal process for monitoring and improving measures found unsatisfactory.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Measures are clearly stated with timelines of expected outcomes in Appendix A that align with project objectives and activities.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how a formative evaluation guided by critical evaluative questions will guide the determination of effectiveness of project implementation (fidelity) in each LEA or how a set of summative (outcome) evaluative questions will determine effectiveness of the grant funds invested to accomplish objectives (impact analysis).

The evidence merits a score in the upper middle point range because it is unclear how evaluation efforts will measure effectiveness of RTT-D investments that clearly reveals impact of the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Budgeted expenses align with the major project components to be implemented.

2. LEAs contribute/leverage local and state funds in ways that support implementation of critical project components.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the 2.5 FTE personnel for site coordination are divided among the 3 LEAs.

2. It is unclear if the administrative assistant to the “grant coordinator” is for the “project director.”

3. It is unclear how the budget ensures lowest-income or isolated families in each LEA are to receive services that give them equal capacity to participate in the project (e.g., computer availability in home and or home Internet access in remote rural areas to access learning resources for managing student’s personalized education plan, for receiving online support, or for accessing data and information from the project’s website). For example, the budget narrative reflects no funds for this concern in Project 6-Quality, Innovative Before and After School Programs that will provide students the additional time and support needed to be successful while striving to become college and career ready students.

4. Itemized costs for evaluation are not revealed that would show personnel capacity and expertise devoted to the evaluation by Strategic Partnership Schools Group, Inc. to justify $125,000/yr for 4 years.

The evidence merits a score in the lower high point range because it is unclear how the budget ensures lowest-income or isolated families in each LEA are to receive services that give them equal capacity to participate in the project. This could be a critical issue in remote rural areas for students and their families and include the students who need the personalized learning environment supports the most.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**3**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant explains how staff training is offered that can potentially sustain project.

2. Applicant leverages existing technology infrastructure to sustain project.

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant describes how funds from other sources are used to support project implementation but provides limited evidence of a plan for sustaining key components of the project after the federal grant funds end.

The evidence merits a score in low middle level of the medium point range because the applicant presents information only on how nonfederal funds are used during the implementation of the project. No evidence suggests the LEAs will continue making investments in the core elements of the project after federal funding ends, for example, for all the staff that is hired in the project to ensure students receive necessary supports for a personalized learning environment in the school and home. It is unclear if teachers, hired on a partial FTE basis, will continue to provide the services or will return to what their full-time roles were in the LEA before the grant. There is no evidence the consortium executive board is scheduled to hold any special meetings to develop a sustainability plan during the project period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. LEAs show a strong history of working with the limited number of organizations, groups and agencies available in the targeted rural areas.

2. Project plan in Appendix B reveals key community partners and activities they will perform.

Weaknesses:

1. An increase in reading and math achievement of 5% for students in grades 6 through 9 over the project period seems less ambitious than anticipated if implemented with high fidelity in the schools with lower achievement compared to the more high performing school when the goal is to provide personalized learning environments that focus on students being ready for college and careers.

2. It is unclear how school system data and data bases in the partnering agencies/organizations will be integrated to ensure accurate tracking of measures for desired results. No process is explained regarding how or when the tracking data will be analyzed and used to target highest need students or how the model will address needs of more students during each year of the project in each LEA.

3. It is unclear how each school in each LEA will integrate education and other services provided by partners.

4. It is unclear how the partnerships will build the capacity of school staff, as no training is described for school staff regarding how to assess the needs and assets of participating students, how to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community, how to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of students, or how to engage parents and families of students. Moreover, no timelines are indicated to reveal when representatives from the community partners will meet with school personnel to review the progress made in implementing the proposed project.

5. It is unclear in the Competitive Preference Logic Model in Appendix B if the deliverables such as training completed are connected to performance measures. For example, 250 parents, teachers, students and community representatives will participate in training but it is unclear how they are to use the training to create the desired outcome/impact for the stated goal.

The evidence merits a score in the lower middle point range because less than ambitious student achievement in reading and math is projected, insufficient information explains how the LEAs and partnering organizations will integrate data and other project information to target high need students, and it is unclear how the partnerships will build the capacity of school staff, as no timelines are noted for essential training.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Numerous examples of the initiative reveal how personalized learning environments are addressed for students. Core components of the initiative that support comprehensive education reform builds on foundations to address academic growth and social/emotional well being of individual students, including the Daggett System for Effective Instruction and the fact that the East Richland district began operating all-day kindergarten in the 1988 school year and Prekindergarten programs in 1990.

Total	**210**	**96**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0239IL-2 for East Richland CUSD #1

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- application demonstrates awareness of the core educational assurance areas by incorporating them into the explanation. For each of the areas, a concise and convincing summary is provided which clearly demonstrates how the vision will achieve goals set out in the criterion.

- key performance measures used to determine effectiveness of the reform effort are identified and based on student outcomes.

- articulates a clear commitment to implementing the assessment program which will inform parents and students about progress as well as teachers regarding learning and instruction.

- the section pertaining to effective teachers and principals is weakened by not addressing the value of the evaluation component. Indeed, the "rewarding" component in this application is rather vague with references only to "personal recognition and stipends." However, the concept is appropriately addressed later under (A)(3).

- the comment that "Currently none of the schools in the consortium are among the lowest achieving schools in the state" portrays a message that commitment to improvement may not be as strong as what is expected. The request for additional funding should demonstrate a vision emphasizing improvement regardless of the level of current performance.

- Overall, this component is in the mid-range.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Documented letters from supporting groups is convincing evidence for high-quality implementation at the LEA level.

- the application appropriately addresses requirements for the listing of schools as well as a comprehensive listing of numerical data for sub-groups.

- the requirement of 40% of students from low-income families is documented by school and is met with 46% of students across the consortium qualifying.

- demographic data requirements regarding schools, numbers of students and educators are appropriately addressed.

- information regarding the process used in selecting schools is rather sparse.

- while "there is documented evidence of response to prior reform efforts and is (its) strong community commitment to the schools," the application could have been strengthened by articulating some of that evidence.

- This component is assessed at the high range and at the lower end of the range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- the articulated plan is strengthened by the marriage of two phases of the RTTT which will support and bolster each district's scope of work and scale-up their already ambitious plans for school reform.

- conceptualizing that birth through pre-school has an impact on learning success in school demonstrates a more comprehensive approach in school improvement. There are many preschool social conditions which impact success in learning and dealing with these at the earliest possible time enhances a child's potential for success.

- the application utilizes the term "scale-up" however detail is insufficient regarding the process to achieve reform beyond the consortium.

- reform initiatives will be based on a sound logic model (Daggett) accompanied by sufficiently detailed steps in the process.

- Convincing detail is provided regarding how student learning outcomes will be improved. Included are significant elements regarding teacher and principal evaluation; the use of technology to support effective teaching as well as an exhaustive list of infrastructure support.

- some requirements of a high quality plan are evident; however, sufficient information on timelines and persons responsible is lacking.

- The overall evaluation of this section is at the medium range and at the high end.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant addresses each of the elements for measurement (a full array of summative assessments, graduation rates, college enrollment and post-secondary rates).

- student sub-groups are appropriately identified for each measure.

- current performance on measures is identified.

- goals are reasonable with achievable, incremental improvements, and are designed to achieve a more equitable outcome by decreasing achievement gaps.

- the overall range for this component is evaluated as high and at the high end.

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**	**5**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- this section's narrative component contains only a description of staff accomplishments and school activities or programs. These statements do not address the selection criteria.

- objective data is provided regarding LEA averages compared with state minimum targets of 85%. Only 2 years instead of the required 4 are provided. Comparing the two years of baseline data provided, achievement levels are consistently below state minimum target levels. This evidence does not indicate success.

- on the 22 measures of academic achievement identified where comparisons between the 2 baseline years can be made, only 50% of the measures improved from year 1 to year 2. There is some success toward improvement but it is not very high.

- a commitment to communicate student outcomes to parents and students is verbalized; however, there is no evidence in the narrative that this has been occurring. This is a significant weakness.

- the overall evaluation in this section is medium but at of the low end.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- all three districts make available all school-level expenditures from State and local funds, which include actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only, actual personnel salaries at the school level for teacher only, and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

- this section is very strong because virtually all reporting requirements articulated comply with specified criteria in the application. School administration is one category required but not specifically mentioned in public reporting.

- a commitment to transparency is both articulated and practiced; however, the examples provided appear to be minimal rather than exhaustive.

- Overall, this section is rated in the high range and at the lower end of the range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- this section describes an excellent summary of the elements of personalized learning that the consortium intends to implement but is sparse in dealing with the issue of successful conditions.

- evidence is lacking that two of the three LEAs have the necessary preconditions and autonomy to implement a personalized learning environment.

- it is indicated that one district has policies which will support the personalized learning environment; however, the narrative does not provide evidence of the specific language in these policies to demonstrate a sufficient level of autonomy in the area of instruction.

- overall this section is evaluated in the low range and at the high end of the range.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- there is evidence of comprehensive communication regarding this proposal with letters of support provided by key stakeholder organizations.

- sufficient time to review the proposal and provide response was given to the state and mayors.

- collective bargaining representatives indicate their support well beyond the minimum requirement.

- it is unclear, because of sparse information contained within this section, regarding the degree to which stakeholder groups were actually involved in the early stages in the development of the proposal.

- it appears that decisions to support the proposal by school boards, administrators and teachers were based upon examination of student data as opposed to examination of the principles involved with personalized learning. From the narrative it appears that information was presented about the current state of learning outcomes and student demographics rather than a primary focus on how classroom instruction would change in the consortium.

- indication is given that input from stakeholders was documented and used to revise the initial proposal. Evidence is lacking, however, regarding how the proposal was precisely revised based on the feedback.

- the overall evaluation of this section is in the middle range and at the lower end of the range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- School delegates from each district represented in this proposal met together to discuss their respective programs, curriculum and activities that support student learning.

- an appropriate logic model is selected to guide the consortium through the various aspects in determining needs and gaps. There is a commitment for annual review of data to be performed by school personnel.

- it is indicated that districts will take appropriate action on various deliverables; however, information regarding responsible parties is lacking.

-a reasonable amount of information is provided which suggests that gaps are identified. While some components of personalized learning environments are currently being addressed, the true scope for success of personalized learning environments will be addressed in this project. All schools realize the need to increase the rigor and relevance of their curriculum to effectively align instruction to the Common Core State Standards and to create an effective school reform model by which this change can occur. Closing gaps is an important deliverable for each of the schools.

- overall evaluation of this section is at the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The examples listed below identify how the applicants will ensure use of a variety of teaching strategies designed to engage and empower the learner and, at the same time, ensure that there is a rigorous course of studies that will accelerate learning. Extensive effort at personalization is evident which will motivate students; keep parents, students and educators informed of progress; and deal with high-needs populations. Further, technology is incorporated to provide everyone with instant access to important information, and there is accommodation planned to ensure effective use of this technology.

- there is recognition that personalizing the learning environment changes from trying to force-fit every student into one model, the answer is to provide, in addition to the traditional model, alternatives that offer flexibility to fit the needs of the students and their families. The districts will address how the learners are grouped and make decisions based on other more effective ways of grouping the learners. The need to offer project-based learning aligned to common core standards and with students engaged in their learning will be the key to the success of this proposed project. These are excellent examples of the core needs which need to be addressed in achieving the desired learning environment.

- students' goals will be developed with the students' input, so that they understand that what they are learning will be the key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

- the Personalized Learning model to be implemented will be goal-oriented and will serve the growing percentage of students who are in need of an alternative to the full-time classroom-based, traditional approach where students learn information through use of a textbook or through learning management systems where knowledge acquisition services are self-guided through simple computer based programs.

- the Personalized Learning Environment model emphasis will be where students draw connections from a growing matrix of resources that will be organized and based on the core educational assurance areas that have been identified.

- data systems will be built that measure student growth and success. Teachers and principals will be informed with data about how instruction can be improved.

- the Personalized Learning Environment model will address the students' cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains because the students will be invested and have input into the establishment of their goals.

- science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education will provide a stronger connection to college and career-ready outcomes and to post-secondary education and training.

- students will actively be engaged in projects within and beyond the classroom so that they will have more opportunities to learn about careers. These projects will assist students in identifying areas of personal interest.

- the students' graduation requirements will be reviewed each semester so that students will understand their achievement of goals and will be able to measure their progress toward those goals.

- a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable each student to achieve his or her individual learning goals to ensure that the student will graduate on time.

- through screenings, children with developmental delays will be referred for appropriate early intervention services. Case management will be provided for families who have children identified with developmental and/or social delays. Truancy programs will promote full day attendance through personal visits with families and their children. Chronic truants will be identified and intensive work will begin with students and their families.

- individual student data will be frequently updated so that students and their families will be able to access information regarding current standings toward graduation requirements.

- monthly education parent meetings and personal visits for all district families will be provided. Educators and parents will be trained on how to access the
student data that supports their goal acquisition. Open computer labs will be accessible. On-line access will be available for the students at school and in their homes.

- through personalized learning plans, parents and students will understand how to structure learning to measure student progress toward achieving goals. Instructional practices will increase to more students actively engaged in higher-order thinking and developing deeper understanding through analysis and problem solving with teachers being facilitators, rather than teacher led instruction, which is typically teacher dominated.

- the personalized learning plans will be completed with the student working with staff. Parents will be involved in this process. These plans will be accessible at all times so that the students will be able to use the plan as a resource in their progression towards graduation.

- personalized meetings will provide learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, graduation requirements, and available instructional approaches and supports.

- additional courses will be developed to fill gaps in curriculum based on project identified needs and gaps.

- additional dual credit classes will be developed and more early college class opportunities will be offered to ensure that curriculum is linked to college and career-ready standards.

Therefore, an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-needs students, in an age-appropriate manner is definitely evident in this application. All aspects of learning in a personalized environment have been incorporated. So comprehensive is the plan that there is a legitimate concern that the commitment toward a high-quality plan is compromised because the scope is too ambitious and the proposed list of activities will overload personnel resulting in burn-out and backlash. Missing in the narrative are indications of reasonable timelines for activities as well as deliverables and responsible parties.

- the overall of evaluation of this section is at the high range. The concern about the full attainability of the plan requires the assessment to be at the low end of the range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**16**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Most of the elements of a high-quality plan are evident in this section.

1) Participating educators engage in training:

-strategies include meetings with teachers, tutoring by teachers, peer tutors, study buddies, one on one assistance, and additional in-school assistance. In addition to monitoring of grades and assessments, other components to be addressed will include student attendance rate and office disciplinary referrals which often affect student grades. These are all important elements in personalizing education.

- strategies will include feedback provided by the teacher and principal evaluation systems, in addition to frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness.

- all professional development efforts will be planned according to National Staff Development Council standards. This new approach will be addressed by incorporating the Daggett System for Effective Instruction, which will be implemented in all schools for all personnel.The PLC's will be district-wide and be job embedded. Strategies will be provided for adaptation of content and instruction so that students will be engaged in common and individual tasks in response to their academic needs, interests, and optimal learning approaches.Staff will learn and be able to implement optimum learning approaches into their course delivery through use of strategies including discussion, collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio based strategies, and manipulatives. Staff will review the curriculum and determine gaps and needs in the curriculum.

- all district educators will be provided regular and on-going professional development during and in addition to these PLC's. No teachers or educational support personnel will be exempt from the professional development activities.

- staff development activities will also be planned as job embedded activities, in addition to special programs and meetings held during the school day and during extended school days; while other trainings will be scheduled in locations away from the districts. School inservice and institute days will also be scheduled in the School Calendar. A project director, site coordinators, and subject matter and grade level instructional coaches from within the current ranks of educators will be employed so that professional development will be provided while educators are on the job. The job embedded instructional coaches will collaborate with school leadership teams to implement instructional strategies to create student-centered learning environments that enhance student engagement, leading to growth in student achievement.

- the training will develop the capacity for staff to lead instructional change, by addressing an agenda of both learning and performance. Teacher leadership will be key to the strategies for achieving success. The instructional coaching positions will be recruited from current teaching staff.

- the training will include Expectations of Race to the Top implementation, understanding personal learning environments, Charlotte Danielson Model of Evaluation, improving teacher and principal effectiveness, community schools, whole school reform, peer evaluations, job embedded leadership coaching, using data for decision making, building learning relationships, instructional strategies for achieving rigor and relevance, using technology to increase rigor and relevance in the classroom, personal skill development, using assessment for instruction, empowering leaders, instructional leadership, Steven Covey's Leader in Me, effective teaching practices, effective lesson design, interdisciplinary instruction, career-ready curriculum teaming and group dynamics, effective instruction using common core standards, STEM initiative, career and technical education, RTI models, differentiated learning strategies, children of poverty, special education, curriculum mapping, alignment of curriculum, development of pacing guides, engaged and project based learning, IPI (Instructional Practices Inventory) training, development of curriculum guides, development of pacing guides which incorporate subject alignment of common core standards, students of poverty, advanced placement course development, personalized on-line learning platforms, Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE)system, longitudinal data systems, Data Interpretation, Technology, SMART Board and iPad training, Lego Education Academy(including Build to Express and service center model), and other topics to be identified.
2) Participating educators potential to accelerate student progress:

- the applicant has flexibility to examine factors regarding how student progress is measured including whether the current system needs to be reformed, if it is fair, accurate, and timely, and whether the use of zeros are inappropriate to the determination of averages. Recognizing that poor grades sometimes are the result of punishment tactics on student behavior, flexibilities in this area facilitates the potential for greater fairness in assessment practices and some students progressing more quickly.

- personalized learning communities, which will support effective implementation of the personalized learning environments will be provided so that teachers and administrators will have access to strategies that will meet each student's academic needs. The PLC's will be provided at a minimum of twice monthly for all staff.

- pacing guides will be developed that will address when and how the common core standards will be addressed throughout all courses. Course overlaps and gaps will be determined so that necessary changes will be identified and implemented. All content will be brought in line with Common Core Standards.

- district educators will be provided instruction on strategies for frequent measuring of student progress toward meeting collegeand career ready standards. Use of collected data will assist project personnel having information on both the students' progress acceleration and the improvement of the individual and collective practices of educators. District educators' performance will be measured by utilizing improved and increased feedback from performance evaluation systems that are in place in the districts.

- progress monitoring will be completed with data produced by Autoskills, Aims Web, and other programs.

3) Student support:
- with a goal of 100% proficiency, the personalized learning environments must be implemented even for those students who are resisting requirements imposed on them to prevent failure. The intervention of adding more time will need to be addressed in courses and their scheduling. Content area specialists will be empowered to deliver interventions. Less

time for elective courses, advanced placement, or course content may need to be revised to incorporate the content which is identified as needing more work.

- training will also include ways of integrating personal skills into overall school curriculum. Staff will learn to implement ways of teaching students personal skills, such as effective communication, respect for others, accepting responsibility, resolving problems, and working on teams. These skills are based on research that has been validated by business owners and are critical for success in the workplace.

- through the training, teachers will work more effectively to find early-warning indicators that will assist educators in the uses of data analysis to intervene to prevent failure for those students who might fail courses. The intervention will include additional time and effort for both the teachers and the students. The interventions will be mandatory for those students who are identified as in need.

- current after school programs, summer classes, credit recovery, and dual credit classes will be reviewed and aligned to common core standards.

4) High quality plan for increasing the number of students receiving effective instruction:
- the focus will be on improved test scores across a broader range of subjects. The PLCs will provide staff with a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning. Sessions will also include all teachers and staff at the school level to work in committees and charged with examining test data and improving student performance. The PLCs participants will spend time dissecting the data to see exactly where and which students are struggling, and what can be done about it.

- following training activities, instructional data will be collected that will be used to measure the impact of school improvement interventions.

- district educators will be provided instruction on strategies for frequent measuring of student progress toward meeting collegeand career ready standards. Use of collected data will assist project personnel having information on both the students' progress acceleration and the improvement of the individual and collective practices of educators. District educators' performance will be measured by utilizing improved and increased feedback from performance evaluation systems that are in place in the districts.

- the traditional school day will be reviewed to determine where any changes need to be made toward improving effectiveness and efficiency.

- with continuous improvement in the training, systems and practices, the schools will look at the level of progress in student's performance and, therefore, the closing of achievement gaps.

Elements of a high-quality plan which are lacking pertain to timelines for activity completion as well as identification of responsible parties; albeit on a few occasions persons responsible were identified. Identification of timelines is particularly important because this is a very ambitious plan that will require a great deal of work by all staff. Perhaps if more attention was paid to identifying the deliverables for the various stages, the feasibility of the plan could be justified and this issue would not be identified as a concern.

The overall evaluation of this section is at the high range and at the low end of the range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal addresses all of the selection criteria identified by verbalizing commitments in the narrative. Significant statements incorporated into the submission are as follows:
- as lead LEA and fiscal agent for the project, East Richland CUSD #1 has policies, rules, and practices in place that will facilitate personalized learning. Board policies are in place that will organize the LEA central office to provide support and services to all participating schools in Richland and Wabash County.
- district policies, rules, and practices also are being implemented to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery not just the amount of time spent on a topic.
- students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.
- formative tests will be given quarterly to determine how the students are doing on the teachers' prepared quarterly pacing guides, which will determine which standards will be taught in each quarter. Further, professional development will be offered to staff to help them understand how to develop better test questions that more closely align to common core standards.
- students will be offered least restrictive placement, opportunities for differentiated learning, cooperative teaching, and RTI assignment to tiers to assist students in skill development and content comprehension.

Therefore, the commitments are stated however other elements of a high-quality plan are undocumented. Specifically, timelines for activities and deliverables are not enunciated as well as identification of persons responsible. These undocumented elements are significant obstacles in ensuring that the criteria will be achieved.

The overall assessment of this section is middle range but at the low end of the range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- the indication is that all three LEAs have policies already requiring stakeholders, regardless of income, to have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of this proposal.

- one of the three LEAs has upgraded their previous data system to the web-based information data base which is interoperable and will incorporate all students' demographic information and classroom grades, in addition to human resources data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

-there is a commitment that the remaining selection criteria for this section will be put into place across the consortium.

- missing in this section are several elements of a high-quality plan. Specifically for those criteria which have a verbal commitment there detail is lacking as to timelines, deliverables as well as who will be responsible for implementation.

- the overall assessment of this section is middle range and at the higher end of the range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Rising Star will be utilized to monitor the school improvement plans which is a resource to assist school district personnel in implementing educational reform projects. The system also provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals and objects, which is necessary for local evaluation.

- the system will provide the district, community members and stakeholders important information to systemic change and instructional improvement in a timely manner through regularly scheduled meetings. Some meetings will be held monthly while others will be scheduled quarterly.

- all staff will be provided professional development in the use of the Rising Star system and will be trained on continuous improvement and how to review, analyze, and draw conclusions of districts' report cards, local assessments, and technology data. Lacking in this element are aspects of timelines, deliverables and responsible parties necessary for a high-quality plan.

- teachers will be required to provide feedback with each professional development activity and there is an ambitious, achievable plan to acquire information about how teachers are addressing the transformational issues being implemented with this project. A comprehensive strategy is outlined for conducting appropriate follow-up with each teacher.

- local and state student assessments will be analyzed and will be available to the students and their parents. Meetings will be held with the students and their families to discuss areas that need to be addressed for continued support towards their achievement of goals.

- teachers will keep records on grades and how the students are succeeding with their goals. Grades will be recorded and reviewed weekly, monthly, and quarterly. Adjustments in the instructional time, supplemental support, and the amount of contact time will be documented.

- the evaluator will assist the consortium in gathering and developing baseline and performance data, establishing measurable indicators of progress toward the objectives outlined in the proposal, attend meetings with district, school, and grant teams, present monthly oral and written status reports, and will work closely with the Project Director to prepare and submit all required reports to the U.S. Department of Education.

- the local evaluator will integrate professional development data with data from other sources to evaluate how the effectiveness of professional development supports can be improved.

The overall evaluation of this section is at the high range and near the middle of the range.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- consideration is being given to provide monthly and quarterly bulletins and student videos in the website that would reinforce transparency of school and district improvement activities. The website will be accessible to educators, students and their families, stakeholders, business people, and community members regarding the process of achieving and measuring improvements in the Race to the Top consortium and districts' performance.

- school improvement plans developed within the districts will be approved by the Board of Education and distributed to the media.

- the School Report Card will be revised next school year to provide detailed explanation of the data and the instruments being used to measure the progress of the students.

- the plan for regular and on-going communication with all stakeholders will involve community and targeted group meetings, news releases, phone calls, and private meetings, in addition to utilizing technology to communicate with stakeholders.

- overall, the plan for transparency is extensive and achievable, and is evaluated in the high range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- utilizing the matrix for the measures required in this section, the consortium has identified all measures

- rationale for the measures are identified for the cognitive ones but generally lacking for the non-cognitive measures.

- measures will provide rigorous information that are sufficiently timely to have formative value.

- as the grant period progresses consortium schools will monitor the reliability and validity of its chosen measures. Proposed measures currently in development will be completed and implemented. Assessments found unsatisfactory will be amended, replaced, or eliminated to fit the changing needs of students.

- overall, the evaluation of this section is at the high range.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- technology to be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of investments will include the web-based Rising Star system, based on Indistar that provides a structure to improve performance at the school and district level.

- data results will reflect all strategies that will be implemented into the current curriculum. The results will be reviewed, analyzed and discussed in professional learning communities that will be held on a monthly basis and bi-weekly during Year 1 of the project. The data results will be kept on file for reporting purposes and determining what additional changes or additions in strategies need to be made.

- additional software utilized within districts that will assist in data collection will be the district financial packages that assist in keeping accurate records on the costs of implementation and costs of the proposed activities.

- all meetings and contacts with community partners will be documented with attendance sheets and minutes detailing topics and discussions.

- in essence, the various technologies and logic model utilized by this consortium will address all aspects of the selection criteria.

- the overall assessment for this section is at the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- the budget presented is comprehensive and exhaustive in every detail.

- other funding sources have been identified.

- one-time funding requests are clearly presented.

- resources for an efficient and effective infrastructure are thoughtfully outlined with clear job responsibilities articulated.

- the planning and quality of the budget presented is so complete that it is evaluated at the high range.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- sustaining the project's goals after the term of this grant will be made easier because so many infrastructure needs will be in place - e.g. technology supports.

- letters of support from the various organizations indicate considerable interest in this project. There is a likelihood that their support will be ongoing. However, there are no pledges of financial support.

- extensive staff training during the project will be carried forward into the post-project era.

- missing from the narrative are details of financial support after the term of the grant. Further, there is no indication of goals, deliverables, activities, timelines and responsible parties regarding extended support. Therefore the elements of a high quality plan are lacking.

- overall the assessment of this section is at the low range range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- a very comprehensive response is provided to each of the criteria required.

- Partnerships are extensive and commitments to educational and non-educational outcomes are robust yet achievable. It is evident that the partnerships will integrate their services with the efforts of the schools.

- ten population-level measures are identified as required.

- the process is articulated which will work with partnerships in tracking selected indicators, use the data to target resources, develop wrap around services which scales-up the services, and then review results with schools to identify improvement areas.

- It may be that partnerships are well engrained in smaller communities; however, the applicant's information on how services would be integrated with the school is rather sparse.

- staff training by the partnerships will be extensive which, given the large number of partnerships, is somewhat of a workload issue. Further, Developmental Asset Training will include tools that school staff can use to identify assets and or the lack of assets in the school and community.

- the applicant indicates that there is already an infrastructure and decision making process in place that include school administration and key staff in their membership. The specifics of this process is not provided. A similar comment applies to the process for engaging parents and families of participating students as well as the process for assessing progress in implementation. Information in these areas, therefore, are evaluated as being too sparse albeit the applicant indicates that these processes are already in place.

- systems will be in place to measure all aspects of the plan and provide transparency of results so that modifications can be made as deemed necessary.

- annual yet achievable performance measures are identified.

- assessment of this section is at the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This comprehensive plan will create learning environments that are specifically designed to improve learning and teaching. There are strong elements of personalization for both the student and the educator. Tools will be provided for effective planning, monitoring, personalizing learning and evaluating performance. There is a strong commitment to college - and career- ready graduation requirements accompanied by commitments to accelerate student achievement and deepening of their learning. Accountability processes will ensure access to the most effective educators that will lead to achievement gaps decreased across all student groups.

Total	**210**	**142**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0239IL-3 for East Richland CUSD #1

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has presented a compelling vision for the administrator, teachers, students, and community in the three districts. They have clearly articulated their vision in a comprehensive fashion. Having already adopted the Common Core Standard and having the alliance with PARCC will enable Illinois, as well as the consortium, in aiding students to gain access to college and to succeed in the workplace. The Shared Learning Collaborative headed by CCSSO which will enable all districts in Illinois a comprehensive data system will be an extremely useful tool to inform district principals and teachers of methods to improve instruction to improve student achievement. Motivating teacher and principals, as well as recruiting new teachers are strengths. In the consortium none of the schools are among the lowest achieving in the state. However all are not meeting AYP criteria.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium clearly explained and justified the process in which the districts were chosen to work together using a Reorganization Feasibility Study of school districts. A complete listing of schools was named in the application along with a

comprehensive description of the school. An extensive explanation of participating students included not only the number, but family background, teenage pregnancy rate, low income, neglected and abuse rate, suspension rate, and Homeless rate. The number of educators participating was also included.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan the consortium has presented is one that is district-wide for each district involved. Their state superintendent supports this effort so that its success potentially could spread state-wide, not just district-wide. The proposal includes a system to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase equity through personalized student support. This will be brought about by a system wide change supported by staff development, comprehensive evaluations and an infrastructure ready to support change. The proposal also addresses coordination efforts with supporting agencies and parents to ensure success.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has taken on ambitious, but achievable goals on the summative assessments for all districts and schools. The goals may need adjusting after the implementation of the PARCC Common Core assessment depending upon the scores of the students in SY 2013-2013. The achievement gaps have been narrowed, but again with the development of a new assessment these may need to be revisited. The graduation rate increase is not as ambitious as expected. At West Richland High School there is no explanation for the decrease for 2 years for the Economically Disadvantaged. Even though there is a redefinition of the graduation rate, the other subgroups did not drop for two years. The consortium has a high rate of college enrollees for rural districts. The goals are still reasonable.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**3**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has a myriad of programs within each of their districts. The clarity of which was not described completely as to how each or all together would improve student learning, close achievement gaps, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment. More specificity was needed about the programs and how they worked together or how they worked to produce the desired outcome. None of the three districts have persistently low-achieving or low performing schools. The proposal is lacking a description of methods in which the student performance data will be made available to students, educators and parents that will improve participation, instruction and services.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium makes available all of the state and local funds according to the application. The State of Illinois and Illinois State Board of Education laws policies, procedures, and practices are in place to audit yearly through and outside accounting firm. All evidence is very clear in the proposal as laid out.

What is unclear is how the salaries will be made available to the public.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**2**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan did not address the extent to which each LEA has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under any State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements.

However, the plan did expound upon the personal learning environment but policies for only one school district which does not cover the consortium.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Consortium obtained many letters of support from the community and stakeholders which demonstrates their commitment to the plan. Description of stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal after their input was minimal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan addresses a plethora of needs and gaps. Some are addressed a couple of times and should be addressed together. Both instances of analyzing data should be combined or if a different data system is being used, the systems should be named. Rigor, relevance, and alignment of curriculum are gaps with convincing evidence. Personalized learning environments for students will be implemented if all components are addressed. What was unclear, however, are that the specific needs of all students were being met in the personalized learning environments.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**11**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does provide a thoughtful and ambitious approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners. The proposal gives a specific example of how one district is implementing a program (Project Lead the Way) that will enable students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college-career-ready standards and how to measure progress toward those goals. The project also involves team-work, goal setting, creativity, and problem solving. There also is a plan in place for the other districts to be trained in the Project Lead the Way. Parental and educational support begins at an early age in the districts. Personalized learning plans will begin for some students as early as birth to ensure he/she can graduate on time. The proposal addresses many factors of a student's life, not merely academic achievement to ensure college- and career-readiness. Parental meetings to be held monthly to address educational, social and behavioral development or students is an appropriate approach for helping to stay focused and getting regular feedback on student achievement. The proposal falls short in identifying a variety of instructional approaches and digital learning content. There are many mechanisms in place for the staff to be trained in the use and understanding of the tools and resources of the college- and career-ready standard and graduation requirement, but very little evidence of training is provided for the students.

There were not clear timelines and deliverables for the high quality plan.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**10**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal addresses strategies to assist students to accomplish goals academically, but is inconsistent in the goal of the participating educators engaged in training and in professional teams or communities to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements (in section a). The proposal indicates that the educators will monitor the students. Merely stating that "strategies will include feedback provided by the teacher and principal evaluation system," does not explain how the feedback will be used or its frequency or effectiveness. Educator's

frequent use of data to inform acceleration of student progress and improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators was not mentioned in the proposal. Time needed for course study was addressed as an adaption for content. A modified grading system for students was also a practice addressed to ensure that students can graduate on time.

The proposal's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is a comprehensive approach for teaching and leading to addresses student academic needs and interests. PLCs will meet frequently and provide staff with a mechanism for professional development involving instructional content and assessments, sharing of student data, sharing of resources, determining curriculum gaps, developing pacing guides, measuring student progress toward meeting all goals, and receiving continuous feedback on student academic performance.

The proposal thoroughly describes the participating school leaders and school leadership team's training, system, tools, data and practices to improve educator effectiveness for the purpose of continuous improvement. However, there is little evidence of planning to improve culture or climate.

The proposal did not have a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction for effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The proposal simply stated that the districts' plan will also address the need. The plan also did not have specific timelines built in.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**6**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium district's local boards of education have all signed Memoranda of Understanding to provide support for the proposal and have been assured of sufficient flexibility and autonomy. The policies mentioned in the proposal were irrelevant to giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, time on topic. The proposal states that students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, but the plan is confusing as to how this will be accomplished. The consortium indicated that resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students would be available, but was not very detailed.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal indicates the program of one to one laptops, but also discusses the fact that not all student learn in the same way. With one-on-one lap top programs, students, regardless of income have access to computers at home and at school. School infrastructures will be updated to support all student's access to on-line learning and support the structure of the personalized learning environments for all students.

Assurances were made that the various stakeholders would have training and technical support through a wide variety of strategies. Assurances again were made that data systems would be in open formats for students and parents.

The proposal does state that the districts do have in place in interoperable data system for school and LEA use. The system will provide a strong support to personalized learning.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal's Rising Star is an ambitious, yet achievable goal for continuous improvement which builds upon the state of Illinois school improvement project. The system is a continuous improvement model that uses data to inform staff and parents of student progress. It is an integrated plan that focuses on effective practices with school initiative and support of all staff and parents. There is a culture of openness and support from all participants. Professional development will be a focus.

The continuous improvement process requires staff how to analyze data about student achievement, teacher and leader effectiveness and supports. The school improvement plan will be reviewed annually.

Regular feedback about student data and progress will be shared with parents after being analyzed by teachers and administrators to help students and their families address continued support toward achievement of student goals.

Evaluation of the project itself will be done to focus on the vision, purpose, goals, and objectives, being implemented. The evaluation will rely on quantitative and qualitative data. The data and reports will be shared with districts, schools, grants teams, and the DOE.

Again, no timeline for the deliverables or persons responsible for these were named in the proposal.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A detailed plan of past and present communication with staff and internal and external stakeholders was given in the proposal, as well as a sound plan for future communication and engagement. Although, the administration indicates that it will review input and make the decisions.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The performance measures are reasonably ambitious and achievable and include the subgroup within the districts. The Illinois Shared Learning Environment will enable the applicants to gauge measure over time and will allow the districts to revamp and improve the process when necessary.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Rising Star system offers a unique technological system to improve performance at the state, district and school level. The system will provide documentation, tracking and reporting to help the consortium evaluate the effectiveness of the investment of the federal and state government. Other financial systems in place at the district level will assist in record keeping of proposed activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium's budget identifies the various agencies involved in the grant and other supporting funds that will be utilized. The budget is reasonable and sound and should be sufficient to enable them to support all activities throughout the funding period. A description of all fund that will be used was included in the proposal including one-time investments versus ongoing operational costs.

A description of all the funds to be used to support the proposal is listed for each project which included the focus of the program or strategy for the personalized learning environments. Each budget item is followed by a description of what the item or person is used for or need for in the implementation of the proposal.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**4**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Long term sustainability was addressed, but not sufficiently. To keep the programs intact that the consortium is depending on to improve the goals and performance measure of the proposal, the funding for the Academic Tutoring, School within a School and Credit Recovery programs and personnel may need to remain in place. However there is community support and state support for other programs that were mentioned in the budget summary.

A big question will be where are all the teacher going to go. How will the staff be used when the grant is over? These questions will need to be answered.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The consortium presents a comprehensive description of the following partnerships within the community: Juvenile Justice Council, Local Police Departments, Richland and Wabash County Sheriff's Office, Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice, Trance Board, and Wabash County Project Services.

The proposal has a logic model with five desired results for students. The plan of how the result would be tracked and how the result would be used to help other students beyond the participants, was collectively described by the proposal; therefore, not giving any specifics.

The proposal simply states that, "With the community partnerships resources district will continue to provide students with an array of services,"

The consortium gives a thorough description of how the partnership and LEA will build the capacity of staff in schools; assess the need and assets of students, community, and schools; identify the infrastructure of the decision making process of the community partnerships; identify how parents are engaged; and assess the project.

The logic model and charts identified five ambitious yet achievable goals..

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has met priority one through creating personalized learning environments for each of their teacher and students through the use of innovative ideas and technology. The Illinois Shared Learning Environment and the Shared

Learning Collaborative should be great tools in helping administrators and teachers, and eventually students and their parents in helping pave the way for improved education. The state has adopted the Common Core Standards and is preparing students to be college- and career- ready. The districts are using a new evaluation system to increase the effectiveness of administrators and teachers, releasing those who cannot be effective and rewarding those who are highly effective. With all the strategies discussed in the proposal the consortium is preparing to have all of their students, college- and career-ready.

Total	**210**	**130**