



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0513AR-1 for Elkins School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Coalition describes a vision of project-based learning in which students can follow interest areas through personalized learning modules. Noting that no database of project-based lessons is available, the Coalition proposes to develop the lessons and to share them with others. Project-based learning could provide a greater degree of personal investment and meaning for students in the learning process.</p> <p>The Coalition is not specific, however, about how teachers would be prepared to transition to this very different form of learning, except that they would choose between two models of professional development. The proposal does not address what capacity the Coalition has or would develop to create these project-based lessons while ensuring that Common Core standards are included and met. It also does not address what grades or grade spans would be involved in this effort.</p> <p>The Coalition does not mention how their disparate data systems would be combined together and by whom. Regarding recruiting and development of teachers, the proposal does not mention any new plans that would be implemented in addition to current practice. Each district in the Coalition would also come up with its own performance pay system, but the proposal section does not mention how capacity would be built to do that. The proposal does substantiate that many of the schools in the Coalition are low-performing. The proposal, however, does not mention efforts they have made in the past to turn around these schools nor address the issue of how districts with many low-performing schools would have or build the capacity to enact the changes described here.</p> <p>Due to the absence of elements that would make up a clear and credible approach, this section scored in the low-medium range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(2)(a) This section does not address how schools in the Coalition would be selected to participate.</p> <p>(A)(2)(b)(c) All of the schools in the Coalition districts are listed. The number of high-need students is the same as the number of students from low-income families. In most schools, the number of total students is greater than the number of high-need students, but according to the table all students would participate. Given the small size of the schools in these districts, and the presence of high needs across the coalition, it is reasonable to target the program at all schools. Although the proposal does not mention this, the total percentage of students from low-income families exceeds the required level of 40%, so these schools would be eligible to participate. Therefore, the applicant has presented information about the participating schools, has substantiated that they are high-needs schools, and has provided the requested list of schools, which justifies a score in the high-medium range. The logistics needed to implement this kind of learning at all grade bands across schools with fidelity are not addressed.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As all schools in all districts would be participating, there is no plan to scale up to the rest of the schools in the Coalition. The proposal mentions offering to other districts in Coalition counties the database of Personalized Modules. The proposal also mentions offering wi-fi access to other interested parties, but it is not clear what this means. Therefore, the scale-up plan is not high-quality in that it does not specify key goals, activities, rationale, timeline, and responsible parties.</p> <p>The theory of change charts the inputs and activities that are the focus of the proposal. Some have not yet been mentioned or</p>		

described, such as wi-fi access or involvement of higher education. It is not clear, however, how these activities would lead to short-term outcomes such as creativity or imagination (and why they would come before an intermediate outcome of student-driven instruction), how those outcomes would be measured, and how they would lead to long-term outcomes such as student achievement.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes the current assessment plan and the anticipated move to PARCC assessments. The information provided, however, does not describe how the changes that would result from the grant are likely to improve performance on these assessments, either by improving instruction in relation to standards or another way. Several instructional strategies are mentioned (flipped classrooms, Rosetta Stone, Khan Academy, etc.) but no vision is articulated as to how they will be chosen and employed to improve performance on assessments or to reduce achievement gaps. This section also mentions one-to-one technology and online meeting spaces for the first time, but does not describe the extent to which this is in place or will be implemented. The proposal asserts that achievement gaps will decrease and graduation rates and college readiness will increase with personalized learning modules but does not substantiate the claim with citations or data. The proposal states that mastery grading will be implemented as part of the effort to increase graduation rates but does not describe mastery grading, and also states that each district will come up with its own system of mastery grading, which would seem to neglect one of the advantages of being in a coalition and may decrease the usability of lessons and grading systems across the coalition as well as make data more difficult to aggregate. Overall, the proposal does not articulate a specific and high-quality plan, which resulted in a score in the lower range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not provide the requested information to substantiate that the Coalition has a record of success in any of the requested areas. Some data are presented in Appendix B, which provides some response to section (B)(1) and justifies some credit. but as they are for only one year (2011 or 2012), they cannot support a claim on a clear record of success in the past four years. The issue of making performance data available was not addressed.

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

The proposal lists Arkansas Website Requirements stating that districts should make available on web sites certain kinds of data, including salary information. It does not specify whether these requirements provide that the data must be displayed in the ways described in the notice, however, and does not state the extent to which the LEAs in the Coalition are in compliance with these requirements nor provide any sample pages in the narrative or appendices. Therefore there is little substantiation of the claims of data access.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has made it clear that there are opportunities to request waivers from the state for requirements that would interfere with the plan, and has provided sufficient evidence that members of the Coalition have requested waivers in the past and that the state accepts such waivers. It is not clear how often the waivers are successful, or how successful the Coalition has been with its waiver, but the proposal includes information that demonstrates flexibility on the part of the state. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the Coalition would have access to flexibility, which resulted in a high-medium score.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence that school personnel support the application, primarily because it would bring additional funding to the

schools. Several letters are included from educator stakeholders and community members. A sufficient number of teachers surveyed support the proposal. The Coalition appears to have made extensive outreach efforts to school and community members to garner their support and has provided evidence of their support, justifying a score in the high range. However, several of the respondents have indicated that they have unanswered questions about elements of the plan, such as professional development, module development, use of technology, and teacher incentives. No information was provided as to whether or not these questions were answered to the satisfaction of the stakeholders before the proposal was submitted.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal provides additional detail on the plans to implement professional development and mentions 1:1 technology.

However, it does not, as requested, present a high-quality plan to analyze the current state of personalized learning environments and how the changes will address gaps. A high-quality plan would include who would analyze the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments, the methods to be used, a timeline and list of deliverables, and a plan for responding to gaps identified. The proposal lacks these elements and thus scores in the low range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal makes clear how the Career Action Planning process allows for choosing, pursuing, and following up on personalized learning goals for secondary students, as requested in the notice. The proposal also describes the sources of data through which student progress on standards can be tracked, which substantiates the availability of information that would determine progress toward mastery of standards and graduation requirements. Therefore the section is partially responsive to the notice.

However, there is still insufficient detail provided about the modules and their development, testing, and evaluation process to substantiate that they will provide students with deep learning experiences, have access to diverse cultures, develop traits such as teamwork, and experience high-quality instructional environments as requested in the notice. Various learning technologies are mentioned but there is no description of how these will be chosen and used, nor descriptions of how accommodations will be made for high-need students or student with disabilities within the new modules. This detail is needed in a high-quality plan to provide evidence that the Coalition has the capacity to carry out its ideas. Because of the lack of this requested information, this section scores in the low range.

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

20

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal substantiates that educators have access to various data on student progress, although it does not describe how those data are used and how teachers are supported in their use of data. The proposal also describes a plan for an appropriate system of teacher and principal evaluation that will be implemented across the state beginning in 2013. Therefore it is partially responsive to this section of the notice.

However, there is a continuing lack of detail about the plans the Coalition has for professional development to support the learning modules. It is unknown who will be provided professional development, who will be providing it, and what are their qualifications for providing professional development to support the changes proposed. There is also no specific high-quality plan to match student needs with particular learning resources. In addition, the approach to increase the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective educators is limited and vague.

Although they provided evidence that educators have access to data and described statewide plans for an educator evaluation system, the applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for professional development supporting the personalized modules, matching learning resources to student needs, using information to improve schools or close achievement gaps, or increasing the number of students who learn from highly effective teachers. Therefore this section scored in the low range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While having a grant coordinator is a helpful approach to supporting grant activities, section (D)(1)(a) does not otherwise describe how the LEA's governing structure (which itself is not described) would be organized to provide services to all participating schools.</p> <p>It is not clear who (at what level of governance) would be able to provide each participating school with flexibility over staffing decisions and things like schedules and calendars. If participating schools are on different schedules and calendars, that might make it more difficult to act as a Coalition.</p> <p>The ways in which schools would be supported in transitioning to a mastery credit system are not described, although a waiver request to do so is possible. With each school being expected to come up with its own mastery grading system, it is not described how the Coalition would provide or be provided with support for this transition, and how numerous small schools would have the capacity to develop their own grading system yet maintain a high level of quality across the Coalition.</p> <p>Multiple learning resources are mentioned. However, it is not clear how the Coalition would evaluate and ensure that learning resources will be fully accessible to all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strategy for ensuring access to students, parents, and educators to learning resources and technical support is left up to individual districts, instead of being planned and supported by the Coalition. While several approaches are mentioned, this plan could lead to a lack of consistency and an uneven level of support across the Coalition. There is no plan to ensure a consistent minimum level of resources and support.</p> <p>There is no specific plan to achieve (D)(2)(c).</p> <p>While the proposal discusses some of the data systems in use, there is no description of how they are currently interoperable or specifically how they will be made interoperable.</p> <p>Because of the lack of high-quality plans, this section scored in the low range.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Much of the responsibility for continuous improvement rests with the Grant Facilitator, along with PLCs at the various buildings and superintendents in the districts. No other governance structure for the Coalition is mentioned. The Facilitator will be responsible for collecting and presenting all of the accountability data for the Coalition. It is not clear to what extent the Facilitator will have the power and autonomy to bring about change in line with the continuous improvement process. Resting so much of the responsibility on one person who is yet to be hired means that the process depends on the quality of that person to a large degree.</p> <p>Although planning for the Facilitator is partially responsive to the notice, the plan lack specificity on how the Coalition will otherwise provide for a rigorous continuous improvement process.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Communication with internal and external stakeholders appears to be primarily the responsibility of the Grant Facilitator. It is not described how the Facilitator will be trained and evaluated in this role. Putting this responsibility on one person who has yet to be hired, and whose preparation are not described, does not make for a fully fleshed-out approach to stakeholder</p>		

communication.

An Arkansas Rural Schools Coalition Report Card will be developed, modeled on school report cards. It is not clear what information this report card will contain and how it will relate to the grant, but it would be some means of transmitting information to school and parent stakeholders. Therefore, the plan for ongoing communication and engagement is vague and scored in the low-medium range.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Some indicators are addressed, such as the number of students completing the FAFSA (although whether the goal of 100% completion every year is not explained and seems unlikely unless the Coalition has specific processes in place to achieve this, which are not mentioned). Others do not seem to capture the intent of the assessment. For example, students completing a vocational program or being on track to graduate from high school do not appear to fully address the intent of being college and career ready, and the applicant does not provide a necessary rationale for choosing this measure. The proposal is not specific about the age-appropriate indicators of academic growth. Indicators of health and social-emotional status are all dependent on the Classroom Walk Through, whose contents are not specified, so it is not possible to determine the extent to which it will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information. Because of the lack of specific, ambitious yet achievable performance measures, this section scored in the low range.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Some additional details about professional development and compensation plans are given in the proposal, including adequate information on how professional development would be evaluated and examples of instruments that could be used. Some plans, like those for teacher compensation, would be left to the individual districts. It is not substantiated that individual districts would have the capacity to devise and implement with fidelity a compensation reform plan that would be effective and equitable across the coalition, and it seems unlikely that they could without support given the difficulty of the task for any LEA.

The applicant has not aggregated information about evaluation into a coherent, specific overall plan that enables the reader to know how well the Coalition will be able to evaluate the grant as a whole. It is therefore not possible to be confident that they have a plan that will result in a high-quality evaluation.

This section scored in the medium range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The budget identifies funds that will support the project, all of which appear to be coming from the grant itself as the applicant states they receive small amounts of local and other federal funding.</p> <p>The plans for project activities are not specific enough to allow for full confidence that the budget is reasonable, or to constitute a full rationale for investments and priorities. The budget narrative contains insufficient detail to fully determine whether the costs are accurate. For example, as no decision has been made as to a professional development provider, it is not possible to know whether the amount included for this is realistic. In addition, other categories are not well-explained. For example, there is a large amount of money dedicated to travel in Years 1 and 2, and to supplies in Year 1, but little information as to what it will be for or why the costs are not carried out through the years. A large amount of funding is dedicated to teacher incentives and instructional support without a specific Coalition-wide plan as to how to award that funding, and thus the funding lacks a clear rationale. The budget information does not provide clear strategies for long-term sustainability. Therefore, this section scores in the low range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Sustainability is addressed only in the context of maintaining pay for the rewarding of teachers in post-grant years. While</p>		

noting that one Coalition district has participated in such a plan for years, the proposal only notes that the districts have little local and federal revenue. Therefore it does not appear that there is a specific plan to maintain the teacher reward structure or any other aspect of the grant. A high-quality plan would have included goals and activities, a timeline and a set of deliverables, and an indication of who would take on particular tasks in carrying the work of the grant forward. Because these elements are missing, this section scores in the low range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal mentions several possible partners who have worked with the schools, but does not describe any specific plans for any particular partnership that meet the requirements of this competitive priority. There is no description of a current partnership, nor any population-level desired results of a partnership with associated indicators and data. Because no specific partnership is proposed, the proposal does not (and cannot) describe how a partnership would build the capacity of staff in participating schools. Therefore, this section scored in the low range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not coherently and comprehensive addressed how it will create the Personalized Modules that are at the heart of its plans. It has not addressed with minimum specificity how it will address the professional development needs required, ensure quality products, and evaluate results. For example, the proposal never contained a plan for developing the modules that addressed what was to be developed, who would develop them, how they were to be developed, how many would be developed, how much each might cost, when exactly they would be developed, and how they would be tested and used. It is therefore not possible to be confident that the applicant could carry out the Personalized Modules with enough quality to substantially improve student outcomes. Because the Personalized Modules were the centerpiece of the plan for personalized learning environments, this proposal does not meet Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	70
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0513AR-2 for Elkins School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a comprehensive vision that is situated within the economic context for which schools prepare their students. The skills that have been identified as 21st Century skills are based on current feedback from the business community and their relevance and timeliness are well documented. The vision is ambitious but credible. The applicant demonstrates clearly that the intended outcomes of this proposal will result in higher student achievement and increased teacher effectiveness. This vision demonstrates that the applicant is already applying proven strategies that promote student achievement, and makes a very credible case that current practices would be scaled up to achieve even greater results.

Deepening student learning is not addressed explicitly. While many strategies such as the retention of highly qualified teachers and innovative practices such as project-based learning support the vision to increase student achievement, descriptions on how deepening student learning is going to be achieved is missing. Increased equity is achieved through making available electronic devices and access to the internet available to students and other stakeholders. Equity in terms of equal access to educational opportunities by all students including high need populations to programs where students are mastering multiple courses simultaneously is not described.

This section demonstrates not only that personalized learning will be anticipated but outlines why it is important and how it can be achieved in terms of student achievement and partially how equity is to be achieved.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes that the member schools have common challenges they are facing. The challenges listed are more relevant to high school students and middle school students than to the elementary schools. Including all of the coalition's 34 schools in this proposal may distract the applicant from implementing a high-quality school reform where the need is identified to be the greatest, at the secondary schools. The improvements and needs identified in the proposal are directly tied to increasing student achievement, college enrollment, and graduation rates.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not describe a high-quality plan that is based on a needs assessment that lead to the identification of clear goals. The persons responsible for implementing those goals are not sufficiently described, and a timeline during which these goals are to be met, is missing. While a group of people is identified as being invested in by the coalition, the plan does not sufficiently describe what specific investments are needed to achieve the desired results. The current plan is not credible because it does not describe how it will meet its current goals. The plan does not state how meaningful reform is being achieved through working with the coalition schools first, before the scale-up and reform can transcend past the coalition boundaries.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that teachers would teach to the standard curriculum provided by the state. There is no documentation of the consideration of more rigorous curriculum to improve student performance on summative assessments. No mention is made how students with high needs would be accelerated to have an equal chance of doing well on summative assessments. The applicant provides a list of summative and formative assessment tools. Identifying summative assessment tools is not sufficient evidence that would improve student learning.

A description of how achievement gaps are identified is lacking. The applicant acknowledges that there is an achievement gap that needs to be closed, but offers no description of what the gap or gaps are. There is no clear vision on what strategies will be employed to close the achievement gap to improve student learning. Instead, the vision lists various efforts without clear connections on how they would contribute to closing the achievement gap.

The strategies offered to increase graduation rates are based on the coalition's beliefs rather than research and or best practices. The coalition anticipates that more technology, more trained teachers to facilitate student-driven instruction, and more personalized modules will result in increased graduation rates. The link between these strategies and increased graduation rate has not been established.

The efforts listed by the applicant regarding college enrollment are insufficient. One meeting to discuss college and career interests and the completion of a college and career survey. Other strategies such as personalized modules may provide higher college enrollment, but the direct link between the two is not established.

The charts provided show established baselines and target rates of improvement for areas of student achievement, graduation, and college enrollment. However, the growth is consistent with state projected rates and shows no growth that would be attributable to the applicant's vision in this proposal.

The applicant vision is likely to generate limited results in improved learning and performance and equity.

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	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a clear record of success over the past four years.</p> <p>Reference is made to the efforts and success at the middle school level at a time when project-based learning was implemented. Low achievement is attributed to districts not utilizing proven strategies according to the applicant. No concrete evidence is provided to demonstrate that the improvements that were noted by the applicant were made using the project-based strategy. No references are made to current research or a program effectiveness study that supports this claim. This example of the middle school is not sufficient evidence of a clear record of success. The applicant states that models of differentiation and remediation have been applied in coalition schools that have lead to increased student success. It is not evident how these models have increased learning outcomes and closed the achievement gaps. No timeframe is documented to show over what period of time these models have been implemented and specifically what type of success they provided. The statement by the applicant that success was achieved by implementing models of differentiation and remediation is insufficient evidence in demonstrating a clear record of success.</p> <p>Further, there is no evidence that student learning and achievement was advanced and that equity in learning and teaching was increased. Therefore, there is no documentation that would demonstrate whether or how student learning was improved, reforms in low performing school to improve student learning were made, and significant reforms in lowest-achieving schools achieved. High school graduation rates and college enrollment rates are also not provided that would demonstrate a record of success over the past four years. Charts are not provided that would depict four-year records of improved learning and reforms in lowest-achieving schools. The proposal does not contain information that student performance data is made available to stakeholders.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that school-level expenditures are made public in the are of K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. This statement does not explicitly state that actual personnel salaries in relation to all school-level instructional and support staff as well as personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only and actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only.</p> <p>The applicant did not demonstrate the extent to which personnel salaries are already made public.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that some school districts in the state have receive funds for programs that have a similar component as the one being proposed in this application. This applicant attempts to show that the state is building an infrastructure that supports project-based learning. The example is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments as it is limited to project-based learning at the high school level and does not consider personalized learning envrionments at the elementary level. The example does not demonstrate how current laws are providing the conditions and autonomy needed to implement personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The proposal includes a list of waivers and a description of their rationales. This list may serve as an example of how many statutes would have to be waived in order to implement project based learning, but it offers very limited insight into the conditions that do exist and the extent to which autonomy is provided through state laws. In addition, the waivers only depict one school district, namely Lincoln Consolidate School District. It is unclear whether all districts in the coalition will have to request waivers to implement the program or whether waivers are already in place at other districts. The applicant notes that</p>		

the state has granted waivers to other LEAs in the past that are favorable to what this application is proposing. This is not sufficient evidence that the applicant will have successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments.

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

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Input was sought from stakeholders through an open meeting where support was solicited from prospective district stakeholders. Input was considered from those in attendance only. There is no documentation that stakeholders were also contacted via phone or e-mail to reach those who may have not been able to provide input in person. There is no documentation found regarding a description of stakeholders invited to the meetings. Therefore, it cannot be determined if it was students and/or families that participated in the meetings. The applicant also fails to demonstrate how stakeholders were engaged in development of the proposal and that the stakeholder support for the proposal is meaningful.

Survey examples that were generated as part of these meetings are provided in the application. The information provided to attendees, as outlined in the meeting agenda, includes parts of the proposal only. The purpose of the application was noted as increasing student achievement and decreasing the achievement gap. Increasing graduation rates and college enrollement were not indicated on the written agenda. Stakeholders may have not had the entire realm of the application explained to them and therefore may have not had the opportunity to provide feedback/input on all of the objectives in the application. The survey results do not sufficiently document meaningful support for the proposal.

The proposal documents that 70% of teachers support the application but fails to address how teachers were engaged in the development and possibly in the revision of the proposal.

Letters of support are included in this application. These letters are from local mayors, parents, school boards, PTOs and participating district superintendents. Letters of support from local businesses and institutes of higher education are not part of the application. The letters of support do not demonstrate meaningful support as many of them do not describe what type of support they provide to the proposal.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that needs and gaps will be identified after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment. The applicant fails to demonstrate how it will analyze its current status. There is no description of the comprehensive needs assessment and how it will assess the coalition's current status. The logic behind the reform proposal cannot be established without a plan on how gaps and needs are being analyzed.

The applicant further states that professional learning communities (PLC) that are already in place at some campuses will be implemented at all campuses that are part of the coalition. In addition, the applicant states that current efforts will be strengthened. Without a plan to analyze the effectiveness of the PLCs in relation to the proposal's objectives, it cannot be assumed that the PLC will contribute to meeting the applicant's goals.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	3

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that annual meetings take place at secondary schools where students, parents and teachers meet to discuss academic interests as well as career- and college interests that aid in the development of annual academic schedules. It is further documented that progress is noted toward the students' goals based on data from ACT and other tests.

The applicant demonstrates that through the incorporation of digital technology, students can access a wide variety of instructional software that personalizes learning.

The applicant stresses the importance of 21st Century skills but states that teachers will force students to apply communication, problem-solving-, and critical thinking skills to learn those skills. This example does not support an approach that supports and encourages students to learn. The proposal does not indicate how the plan will help students understand

that what they are learning is key to their success. Also not specifically addressed is how parents can assist their students in understanding that what they are learning is key to their success. The proposal only states that communication between parents and students is important. At elementary schools, the applicant states, the counselor speaks to students about career choices and provides materials from conferences. The proposal fails to address how students' immediate learning and development goals at both the secondary and elementary level are addressed through the implementation of rigorous course of study. The applicant states that personalized modules and student-driven projects will provide opportunities for students to deeply engage in areas of academic interest. The proposal does not demonstrate what the academic choices are and how they were chosen to represent student interest and also meet the college- and career-ready standards. The proposal did not explain how students will engage deeply. The applicant demonstrates that students have access to the internet and implies that this access provides access to diversity. It does not demonstrate how this access will motivate and deepen student learning. The proposal does not demonstrate how students can develop creativity, critical thinking, goal setting and other skills.

The proposal does not address what strategies are in place to help students to graduate on time and college- and career-ready. The proposal states that a wide variety of instructional approaches and environments will be available to students August of 2015. The proposal does not show that content is aligned with college- and career-ready standards and fails to document to which extent the formative and summative evaluation tools assess college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements. The applicant does not describe the content, instructional approaches and supports when providing feedback to students.

The proposal fails to demonstrate how training and support is provided to the students to track and manage their learning.

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

The applicant documents the use of a training resource to ensure the implementation of personalized learning environments and describes a high commitment to realizing this goal. The proposal describes the professional development as appropriate and intensive. The documentation does not include how these efforts specifically will translate into students' abilities to graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

The proposal addresses formative and summative assessments in regards to standards mastery. It does not specifically address the assessment of college and career-ready skills and did not offer a timeframe on how often assessments occur. The applicant does not describe how content and instruction are adapted for high need populations.

The teacher and principal evaluation system that is going to be incorporated will not show data on teaching proficiency until 2017-2018 which is beyond the duration of this grant. Personalized professional development will begin in 2015-2016 which may be also be untimely to effectively affect change.

The proposal discussed the topic of "access of high quality resources for educators" in terms of access to students. The proposal does not list processes and tools that would match students' needs with teacher resources and approaches.

The proposal discusses one tool which is the teacher and administrator evaluation system but does not offer a description on how the results would generate training for staff. It lacks detail the training, resources, and data to structure an effective learning environment.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	4

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal states that a grant coordinator will be hired to provide support and services to all schools participating in this grant. Considering the large size of this coalition, it seems unlikely that one person would be able to manage all aspects. Leadership teams at the central office levels of the various participating school districts are going to be in place, and the

applicant provides examples of the autonomy the leadership teams are given for this grant. The proposal states that the coalition would ask for waivers for students to earn credit based on mastery of content not the amount of time spent on a topic from the state beginning in January of 2015. This time frame is not immediate enough to give students the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery.

The proposal states that a mastery grading system will not be adopted by all schools until year four of the grant. A mastery grading system is optional for participating campuses, according to the proposal. Without a timely mastery grading system in place, one or more of the goals in this proposal cannot be met until after the end of the grant.

There is limited explanation on how learning resources are adaptable to meet students' varying academic needs.

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

The proposal supports autonomy for the coalition schools on how they choose to provide internet access to its stakeholders. The applicant lists several examples about how schools are already providing access to the internet for its stakeholders. The applicant demonstrates high commitment to the provision of digital devices for stakeholders even away from school and outside of regular school hours.

The applicant demonstrates the use of interoperable data systems by providing several examples of data management systems that support a variety of data sources.

The proposal provides limited information about access to content, tools, and other resources. The description of how the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning is limited to technology and its electronic access. There is no description that for example the Common Core Standards can be accessed via the internet or that some of the instructional tools used to personalize instruction can be accessed electronically.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists several goals of its plan and states that the progress toward meeting those goals are going to be addressed through a system where teachers provide input at meetings and that input is reported to administrators. In addition, the applicant states that a grant facilitator will be hired to oversee the implementation of this proposal.

The proposal does not contain specific timelines and strategies that would suggest a systematic strategy to monitor progress toward the proposal's goals.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The communication that is demonstrated in this proposal suggests that the communication channels are one-way with communication coming from the central office as information to the stakeholders instead of the stakeholders being engaged in communication with both internal and external stakeholders. One-way communication does not lend itself to engagement. Stakeholders who are informed do not have the level of commitment as if they are participating in two-way communication that will also foster engagement.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists expectations for teachers to develop, teach and assess project-based lessons for all students in all grade levels. The number of project-based lessons for all students is to double annually and is measured through classroom walk

throughs. The number of of project-based lessons per year starts with one lesson per year during the second year of this grant proposal. For secondary students, the number of project-based lessons is higher. Student engagement for all students is targeted to rise by 50% each year as documented by walk through data and is also consistently expected of all students. Technology fluency is expected to increase as measured by a technology fluency evaluation tool. No target measures have been noted.

Performance measures that demonstrate the percentage of teachers and principals that are effective and highly effective are not provided by the applicant. The applicant documents that the state in which the coalition is located has identified measures through which this determination can be made.

Performance measures that demonstrate one age-appropriate measure for Pre-K - 3rd in the area of cognitive and non-cognitive growth is not included.

The number of students in grades 3-8 who are on track for college-and career-readiness are not indicated. The numbers will be available at a later time. The criteria that is documented for this performance measure is listed as promotion to the next grade level.

While the applicant-proposed performance measures include annual goals, they lack frequency and a clear description of what the expected outcome is. This proposal's vision is based on the implementation on project-based learning, and to only include one-project-based lesson per year in certain grades seems to be an underutilization of its efforts.

Required data such as the number of students who have completed FASFA applications are not included by the applicant. Instead, all of the required high school data is summarized by stating that this data will be provided by either the school counselor and/or the grant facilitator.

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

The applicant will hire a grants facilitator to evaluate the data to determine effectiveness of instructional strategies by examining and disaggregating the data. The grants facilitator will have the opportunity to evaluate the data and determine its effectiveness as this facilitator will have first-hand knowledge of the instructional strategies that are implemented and how effective they are. Technology effectiveness is measured through a system called "Technology Impact on Learning" that evaluates the effective use of technology. Measuring any initiative with a universal instrument may not yield the type and detail of the data that is needed to make improvements to the existing use of technology.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project.

The budgeted amount for this proposal is sufficient to support the proposal but is not reasonable for the following rationale:

The proposal budgets a very large amount (21 million dollars) of funds for teacher incentives. These incentives are budgeted to be paid to teachers over a 4-year period; the time span covering the grant. This budget allocation for teacher incentives is unreasonable. Some of the strategies that are part of this proposal are not due to be implemented until the second year of the grant, yet teachers are rewarded for outcomes that are not supposed to occur yet. There is no established criteria in the proposal that would discern whether students' achievement has to be at a certain level in order for teachers to receive the incentive stipend.

The budget includes identical amounts of funds for item 3. travel, and item 7. training stipends. The amount for item 7. training stipends is calculated incorrectly. Some items such as indirect costs do not include descriptions. The budget includes fringe benefits for stipends in an amount exceeding 3,000,000.

The applicant states that the only source of revenue for this proposal is the Race to the Top -District grant. No other funds have been identified.

The applicant distinguished between those that are one-time investments and those that are used for ongoing costs.

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(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has high expectations for this proposal as stated in the vision section. A project-based learning bank is anticipated to be shared with non-participating schools and students after the grant period.</p> <p>The proposal states that the teacher incentive pay will not continue after the term of the grant. Unintended consequences such as lower teacher morale and teachers seeking employment elsewhere are not discussed in the proposal.</p> <p>The proposal does not consider electronic devices to become obsolete during the term of the grant. There is no documentation that this factor was considered when purchasing electronic devices for all students in an amount exceeding \$4,000.000. Maintenance, operating costs, software purchases and licences were not separately described in the budget and would need to be considered to sustain the technology portion of this proposal.</p> <p>The plan states that no support from State and local government leaders to include financial support can be expected.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes the importance of social and emotional well-being of its students as well as their health. Programs and partnerships are described that will enhance the social and emotional well-being and health of the proposal's student populations.</p> <p>In addition, there is community support to provide space for meetings so that parents and other community stakeholders can be involved.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant demonstrated an ambitious vision, the implementation of this vision was not demonstrated with the needed supporting details.</p> <p>The proposal does not address what strategies are in place to help students to graduate on time and college- and career-ready. The proposal states that a wide variety of instructional approaches and environments will be available to students August of 2015. The proposal does not show that content is aligned with college- and career-ready standards and fails to document to which extent the formative and summative evaluation tools assess college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements. The applicant does not describe the content, instructional approaches and supports when providing feedback to students.</p> <p>There is limited explanation on how learning resources are adaptable to meet students' varying academic needs.</p> <p>The proposal does not contain specific timelines and strategies that would suggest a systematic strategy to monitor progress toward the proposal's goals.</p>		

Total	210	62
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0
Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments: The optional budget supplement is not included with this proposal.		



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0513AR-3 for Elkins School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points were awarded to this section because the applicant's plan articulates how it will adapt state standards to meet the needs of students, how it will build data systems to support students and measure student achievement and how it will recruit, develop, and retain teachers. Excluded from its plan is how it will attract, develop and retain effective leaders. Also, the plan does not include strategies to turn around its lowest performing schools however included all of schools as low performing.

The applicant acknowledges its successes of its students found in results of a survey done by business leaders in Northwest Arkansas. Students in the consortium's districts were not deficient in literacy or math but in problem solving skills. The applicant's need for reform is linked to these findings. Noting that "rigor, relationship, and relevance" is incorporated into student educational goals, but that gaps remain in the area of relevance.

The plan articulates a clear roadmap to restructuring academic programs by adapting student lead modules versus traditional teacher lead instruction. This adaptation is a promising concept for middle school and high school students. The plan leaves questions as to how these modules will impact primary and elementary school students. The applicant did not address specifically how strategies of the plan will be used with younger students in this section.

Since this applicant is a Consortium of rural schools, specific goals incorporate the use of virtual classrooms. This strategy can be highly effective by incorporating the use of Common Core Standards to educate a diverse group of students who are not in close proximity of one another. These virtual classrooms will be structured for project based assignments using personalized modules. A student who needs credit in English II, History and desires to have a career in animation will be able to receive credit in all three of these classes based on his personalized module. Teachers in these specific subject areas will co-teach classes.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points were awarded to (A)(2) because the applicant's plan presents LEA data for participating schools but the plan fails to delineate specific details of consortium demographics only stating that "participating schools are in rural areas with similar demographics, have similar hurdles, as well as similar past results". The applicant presents demographic data for school populations but again is lacking specific details as to how the coalition formed and specifically why schools were selected.

The applicant has delineated data for each school that will be participating in the grant. Schools have been identified by LEA number, name, grade range, number of educators, number of participating students, number of high-needs students

participating, and number of low-income students participating. Percentages of students participating equals 100 percent. Participating percentage of low-income families range from 32 percent to 100 percent with the total average equaling 63.2 percent. The percent of the total number of LEA low-income population is 100 percent, however this information does not provide for a clear picture of student demographics per district.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Low points have been awarded to this subsection because the applicant has not clearly identified how it plans to scale up the reform model. According to the applicant its intent is "to provide an excellent example of turnaround to districts within our counties in hopes they will model change to further advance student achievement." The applicant did not provide evidence of the logic behind its theory of change or specifically how it plans to improve student learning. Absent in the plan are specific strategies that will be implemented to accelerate learning. The applicant did include short, medium and long term goals. For example, integrated technology, Course data base, Exploring, Creativity, Imagination, Investigation, Analysis, and Critical thinking are listed as a Short-Term Goals. Teacher development, Administrative development, and student driven instruction are listed as Medium-Term Goals and Improved test scores College readiness, Career readiness, Student confidence and Real-world skills are listed as Long-Term Goals.

While these goals are necessary to support the outcomes of the plan the vision for achieving is not clear.

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

Medium points were awarded to this subsection because the applicant's vision to increase performance on summative assessments hinges solely on continued use of current tests with increased focus on Common Core Learning Standards with out specifically including other strategies to increase student performance. Future state targets include Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers for K-12 (PARCC) which is a positive move with results directly affecting the applicant's students. The applicant's narrative does reference ambitious yet achievable goals with evidence of statewide targets. The alignment of the applicant's goals to state benchmarks provides aim for teachers and students, however, the plan does not provide specific strategies to reach targeted goals thus closing the achievement gap. The state has Targeted Achievement Gap Groups (TAGG) which is comprised of sub-group categories per school.

The plan has clear goals and targets to increase graduation rates. By increasing project based learning experiences it is the intent of the applicant to raise the number of student who graduate college and/or career ready. The applicant has chosen an unorthodox attempt to increase graduation rates and is willing to apply to the state board of education for a waiver requesting an allowance for students earn credits when mastery has been demonstrated. Questionable is the effect on elementary and middle school students. The plan has not fully divulged how implementation with lower grade demographics and for students with disabilities or other special populations will decrease achievement gaps. College enrollment rates are stagnant compared to increasing high school graduation rates. The applicant's approach to increasing college enrollment is general with references to past performance instead of future goals and outcomes.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points were awarded to this section because the applicant has provided evidence of sustaining levels on achievement tests. According to presented data, test scores for schools in the consortium have fluctuated but tend to be more steady than on a downward trend. Overall student achievement for the majority of schools in the consortium performed at state benchmarks for SY 2010-2011 and SY 2011-2012. Reform goals are defined but are general and not ambitious. For example, the plan calls for student driven learning projects using the internet and electronic media but does not specifically describe how this will transform student learning or increase student achievement. The plan does not have specific provisions to

increase learning outcomes for low performing students and there is no evidence in the plan to make student performance data available to stakeholders.

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

5

4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

High points were awarded to this section because the applicant's state has requirements for a high level of transparency of processes, practices and investments and there is evidence of stakeholder participation in the development of the proposal. The schools were responsible for communicating with stakeholders regarding input into the proposal. Survey samples are submitted as evidence. Administrators, teachers and other school personnel completed the survey.

Current comprehensive financial data reports for school districts include:

1. Local and state revenues
2. Administrator and teacher salary and benefits data
3. District balances, including legal balances and building funds balances
4. Minutes of regular and special meetings of the board
5. The annual school district budget posted within thirty (30) days following required to be submitted to ADE
6. A financial breakdown of the monthly expenses of the school district
7. Salary schedules for All employees, including extended contract and supplementary pay amounts
8. Current contract information with all school district employees
9. The annual school district school statistical report

Each district has made expenditure data and other data easily accessible to stakeholders with links to schools on district websites. However, there is no mention of this information being available in hard copy to stakeholders who do not have access to a computer or internet connection.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points were awarded to this section because the applicant's plan includes applying for a waiver from its state in order to override required adherence to current course structures. If successful, this action will provide sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments for high school students and is strongly favorable to increasing student success. However, the plan does not clearly incorporate elementary and middle school expectations and the autonomy needed to implement personalized learning environments at these grade levels has not been discussed.

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

10

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points have been awarded for this subsection because the applicant's plan did not include input from stakeholders beyond the scope of district and school personnel. This indicates limited communications between the applicant and its stakeholders.

The applicant outlines how it obtained input from teachers and families without specifically including students. An open meeting was held for stakeholders soliciting input into the plan. Surveys were given at this meeting for feedback with changes being made to include stakeholder suggestions. This was a onetime instance without additional opportunities for input from stakeholders who may have not had the opportunity to attend the meeting for their school district.

The applicant's state is a "right to work" state. Support from teachers has been included in the plan with examples of the completed survey in the Appendix. Questions range from general to specific but are not inquiry based to increase substance in the responses. For example, "In general do you support the proposed project? Yes or No", "What do you like about the proposal?" "What changes would you recommend to the proposal?", "If the proposal is funded, would you be willing to serve on an advisory committee to review progress made during the proposal?". It is clear from the survey and results that the teachers are on board with the plan. Letters of support are limited to school boards and mayors. Absent from the plan are letters of support from community organizations, advocacy groups, local civic groups and institutions of higher education.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Medium points were awarded for this section because the applicant's plan demonstrated evidence to support implementing personalized learning environments (PLE's). The consortium has developed steps to implement PLE's:

1. 1:1 internet-cable devices to facilitate one to one teaching.
2. Focused Pd to provide initial, ongoing and job embedded training for teachers to implement Project Based Learning
3. Providing opportunity for profession networking in the creation and sharing of projects that inspire critical thinking and problem solving
4. Focused PD development in the use of 1:1 devices in the classroom
5. Creating a true personalized learning environment, in which students in separate districts may be involved in self-selected projects, and who may call on the expertise of specific teachers across the coalition.
6. Students have and use the knowledge, skills and resources at their disposal and discretion to accomplish the authentic tasks in their projects

The applicant's plan calls for a needs assessment to identify needs and gaps at a later date. For effective implementation, gaps and needs evaluations should have taken place prior to completion of the plan to identify improvements across the consortium.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section was awarded Medium points because the plan has not provided clear evidence to support how it will implement rigorous instruction strategies and approaches for students but it has delineated a plan to expand technology usage to expose students to diverse populations through project based learning across the districts of the Consortium.

(C)(1)(a)(i) The applicant outlines a report that states education irrelevance is a problem for today's educators and the gap between how students live and learn need to be closed. This is a positive statement which supports the plan presented by the applicant. According to the plan, coalition educators will teach in a way that forces students to communicate, problem-solve and think critically to drive deeper thinking. This has positive implications to make learning meaningful and relevant for students. The plan also includes soliciting parents to help with students transferring these skills into the home and community. This is a strong statement which will have positive outcomes for students.

(C)(1)(a)(ii) The state in which the Consortium is located has adopted the Common Core Standards in order to provide students with a better chance of success which is positive to step to pursuing learning and development of goals linked to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant has other practices in place to support goals linked to college- and career readiness. For example, Career Action Planning (CAP) conferences which includes parents and students meeting annually to discuss future student goals in an intimate student centered environment. This is a strong statement which clearly demonstrates a student centered approach to developing student goals. Also, school counselors are required to cover three domains: social, academic, and career. This practice includes counselors speaking to elementary school students about long-term goals. These actions provide strong evidence of the applicant identifying and perusing learning and development goals linked to college- career-ready standards.

(C)(1)(a)(iii) The applicant's plan includes the use of Personalized Modules which are two or more classes structure with technology availability and multiple teacher accessibility. This is a positive strategy which will allow for individualization of student outcomes based on student interests. Personalized modules will allow students time to connect with other students for deep learning experiences. This too is a positive strategy for increasing the depth of student learning experiences.

(C)(1)(a)(iv) The applicant's plan outlines expanding improvement and usage technology to increase exposure to diverse cultures, context, and perspectives in order to motivate and deepen individual student learning. This is a strong statement because of the coalitions diverse needs they will be able to implement whatever upgrades in technology needed to connect with each other through the use of technology. Danville Public School has the highest number of minority students within the Coalition at 60.11 percent, while Ouachita Public School has the fewest number of minority students at 3.56 percent. Each district will incorporate access and exposure to other students within and outside of the Coalition. This is a strong statement which supports strategies to expand access and exposure to diverse cultures and connect for deeper learning.

(C)(1)(a)(v) The applicant has plans to pair the offering of Personalized Modules with Common Core State Standards to ensure that students are participating in an integrated learning environment while receiving instruction directed at college and career readiness. This can be effective in covering goals required by the state and allowing students work in teams on interest based projects. The applicant states that educators will promote curiosity and parents will be encouraged to join them in doing the same but it is not clear how either of these goals will be met.

(C)(1)(b)(i) The applicant's response to this subsection is limited to students attending CAP meetings with counselors and parents to evaluate and plan individual learning goals. There is no indication of ongoing interactions to support a sequence of instructional content and skill development and shows gaps in the plan for ensuring students graduate ready for college and/or a career path.

(C)(1)(b)(ii) The applicant has provided strong evidence ensuring students will have access to a variety of instructional approaches by multiple licensed teachers and access to technology on and off campus. This is positive because students will have access to teachers with expertise in areas of interest while completing learning tasks and objectives.

(C)(1)(b)(iii) The applicant has included plans to incorporate digital learning content. For example, Rosetta Stone for language learners, Compass Learning Odyssey as a potential intervention piece, BrainPOP, Explore Learning, and Khan Academy. The use of these software and interactive programs has positive implications to provide students with opportunities with digital content.

(C)(1)(b)(iv)(A) Through the use of formative assessments, including TLI or NWEA the applicant has the capacity to provide updated individual student data. These assessments will provide meaningful data to the Consortium districts to be used to determine progress towards mastery of college- and career graduation requirements.

(C)(1)(b)(iv)(B) The applicant's plan includes allowing Kindergarten students the opportunity to set academic goals through educators harvesting curiosity and independence of students early on. What is not clearly articulated is how teachers will connect student interest to specific learning goals. Older students have the communication abilities needed to conference with teachers about educational goals as well as historical assessment data to reference, therefore this strategy is a strong indicator for students being able to personalize learning. College and career ready standards have been incorporated with the Consortium's adoption of CCS. CAPs conferences are positive support mechanisms to help students develop future goals.

(C)(1)(B)(v) Accommodations have been included in the plan to assist students with IEP's, 504 Plans, Homebound and students in juvenile detention facilities. These students will have personalized learning opportunities. Including students from these demographics into the plan is a strong indicator of the Consortium meeting the needs of all students through the use of personalized learning.

(C)(c) Teachers and school counselors trained in reading and interpreting student data reports. Information such as data is shared with students and parents at CAPs conferences and parent-teacher conferences. Also, counselors meet with elementary students concerning their long-term academic plans. It is unclear how often students have the opportunity to meet with school counselors and how often teachers conference with students. This strategy is a weak indicator of continued student support.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2) The applicant scored in the Medium range because teaching and leading strategies were delineated including strategies to improve outcomes for students by engaging teachers and leaders wight professional development specific to implementation of personal learning environments. However, the plan does not clearly provide evidence of how teachers will use tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college to career readiness.

The Coalition will follow the *Stages of Personalized Learning Environments (Version Two)* Model by Barbara Bray and Kathleen McCaskey which is included in the Appendix. Appropriate and intensive embedded PD will be provided throughout the course of implementation. This is a strong strategy for continued improvement of teaching and leading over time. Content adaptation strategies include facilitating one-on-one technology access to information including videos, peers across the campus and globe, research databases, and a bank of successful student projects. Teachers will receive training to aid in the transition of Personalized Module instructions and PLCs meetings will be face to face as well as in online forums.

Implementing these adaptations will increase the student access to a variety of learning tools and effectively position teachers to meet the needs of students. The Coalition already has formative assessments in place to frequently measure student progress. The Learning Institute (LTI) or Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) are assessment that provide

benchmark data to measure students progress towards achievement. Summative assessments are also given including End-of-Course exams. These are strong indicators of collecting data to measure student performance. The Coalition schools and the state where they are located have elected to adopt the Charlotte Danielson model for teacher and principals.

Plans for training administrators in the Danielson Model is scheduled for the summer of 2013 with system delivery scheduled for SY 2013-2014. The system is both formative and summative with timelines included for ongoing assessments. Additionally, all Coalition schools will develop a superintendents evaluation system. Online PD is available and utilized by teachers. These are strong statements which support strategies to improve teacher and principal practices .

The Coalitions' schools have access to actionable information, included but not limited to: interest inventories, Kuder career quizzes, PLAN, EXPLORE, PSAT, Benchmarks scores and several other specific assessments. These assessment reports include strategies for teachers and students to use in order to improve teaching and learning outcomes which is a strong indicator for achieving specific outcomes using available data.

The Coalition schools have learning resources including those with digital capabilities. For example, Compass Learning Odyssey as a potential intervention piece, Gizmo, and Khan Academy with digital content being made available to students with disabilities. A database will be created to store successful personalized learning module projects and course syllabi. These resources will provide systemic change in the use of technology for the Coalition with positive implications.

Teachscape classroom walkthroughs and the Danielson evaluation system will provide opportunity for administrators to determine the extent to which teachers are employing best practice and making use of embedded PD. This is a strategy is limited because this type of feedback is linear.

PD will be provided in with goals for increasing student performance. PCL's lead by school leadership teams will observe teaching habits as well as provide strategies for teachers by modeling. This is an effective strategy with positive implications to improve school progress.

Coalition schools will incorporate mini-lessons into the interview process inviting school leadership teams to participate in the interviewing process at the discretion of each school. "Domain 3 : Instruction" of *The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* by Danielson will be used to evaluate prospective teachers. This is an effective strategy which allows teachers the opportunity to observe potential colleagues but also it gives them the opportunity to experience how administrators use the evaluation tool.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant was scored in the Medium range because grant oversight has been delineated but specific details to adapt learning resources to all students is weak. However, applying for a wavier from the state is an aggressive pursuit for autonomy to facilitate implementation of personalized learning environment along with other evidence. The Coalition plans to employ a grant coordinator to oversee implementations over the cycle of the grant but the plan excludes clear goals and objectives for the grant coordinator, oversight constraints, and a plan for consortium governance. However, the applicant's plan is for each school in the Coalition to create a SLT which will be given autonomy and flexibility to advocate for instructional strategies needed to implement strategies that effect personalized learning including roles and responsibilities for school personnel and school-level budget but this plan is not clearly articulated. The Coalition plans to pursue waivers though the state school board requesting that schools be allowed to award credit based on demonstrated mastery. However, the plan does not fully provide opportunities for all students, such as primary and elementary students, to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and and in comparable ways. The plan is not clear as to how students will be provided with meaningful learning experiences allowing them to demonstrate mastery. The applicant's plan is to change their standard grading system to a mastery grading system, however schools may choose to maintain a standard grading system. This is a weak plan and does not provide conformity within the coalition to produce specific outcomes for students and data collection.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant scored in the Medium range overall because there is no evidence in the plan for parents and other stakeholders		

to have access to content and other learning resources. However, the plan addressed provisions for access to technology for students and teachers with the option for schools to have " extended open lab", but does not clearly articulate who will have access to the labs. This strategy can be problematic for schools and is not a strong indicator for successful implementation of personalized learning environments. The plan provides for technology support for students during and after school hours, leaving the specifics to each district in the coalition. The plan also suggests technical support through online services, face-to-face, and peer support. These are weak strategies for technology usage and implementation. Parents and students will have availability to export their information into open data passages which is a positive indicator. The coalition schools already have data systems in use to collect, change, and maintain data as needed which is continuation of effective practices within the Coalition districts.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's score for (E)(1) Continuous improvement process was awarded points in the Medium range because the plan outlined a professional development plan with two specific areas of focus to increase teacher capacity to meet plan objectives. The plan also provided evidence of accountability of teachers and staff by engaging in PLC's and Cluster groups. However, the plan does not clearly provide evidence of how PD will be delivered to teachers across the consortium and how feedback will be provided for continuous improvement across the consortium and at each school.

The plan articulated how implementing PLC's and Cluster meetings (TAP model) will aid in the recruitment, development, and retention of highly effective teachers. Within the plan are provisions for support, growth, cohesion, and collaboration of teachers. The model allows for alternative career paths for creating positions for master and mentor teachers, keeping best teachers in the classrooms. This is positive for increasing student performances as well as implement the use of best practices. The above mentioned PLC/Cluster meetings, held at both the school and district level, as a part of TAP/TAP-like system for teacher support will be the venue for determining the fidelity of implementation. Desegregation of state mandated test, formative, CTW data, review of Project Based Lesson, highlights of best practices and issues of concern will be discussed. This format of teacher support is a good plan of action.

Ongoing needs assessments related to RTT-D grant implementations will be the responsibility of the grant administrator but school level administrators, teachers, master and mentor teachers, school boards and the grant facilitator will participate in data meetings. However, there is no plan to implement specific changes using the collected data. The grant facilitator along with district teams will meet with administrators and school level teams for decision making at the consortium level but school level strategies for improvement are absent from the plan. Also, this is a weak plan of action because the grant administrator is not a member of school level teams therefore school level implementations can not be at the forefront of articulations for implementing best practices and ongoing corrections to the plan. The facilitator will be responsible for collecting and sharing data with an annual Coalition Report Card being available for internal and external stakeholders, but there is no plan to disseminate the report card to stakeholders.

Members of the Coalition bring a variety of strengths to the consortium. Two districts have already incorporated mobile internet-capable devices for all students allowing them to implement the plan prior to the other districts in the consortium. Another consortium district is currently using the TAP model for teacher recruitment, development, reward and retention. This is positive because these programs can be expanded to the other districts in the coalition but there is no specific plan to expand TAP to the other schools.

All teachers in the Consortium will be responsible for implementing Project Based Learning modules in their classrooms. A gradual release model of student management will be implemented using the Classroom Walk through instrument. Skills necessary for success will be taught, modeled and practiced in various venues and content areas. This is a good plan which will provide teachers the opportunities to lay out class/module parameters and teacher expectations. However, a plan for feedback for improvement is missing.

Evaluations of coalition schools will focus on two goals: 1.) To provide information about the quality of development and implementation and to that extent the Coalition has achieved its goals and 2.) To provide resources and support to increase capacity of the thirteen schools of the Coalition to see the project become a working realization. The plan calls for evaluations to monitor, measure, and adapt investments in PD: technology and staff are important for the success of the plan. There will be a focus on job-embedded PD in two areas, technology and Project Based Learning. The plan is lacking strategies for how PD assessments will be done and how changes will be implemented.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Score for (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement was awarded points in the High range because the plan provided evidence of implementing a process that allows for timely and regular feedback to and from stakeholders including examples of two-way communication in an ongoing manner.

A grant facilitator will be hired to implement oversight, spending and feedback strategies. This hiring adds credence to the plan and is a clear indicator of engagement and feedback opportunities. Progress monitoring of grant implementations will be done at district and Coalition levels. Building leaders will oversee implementation and progress monitoring locally while the grant facilitator will collect data to monitor overall coalition progress. These are strong statements to support oversight of goals, objectives, and outcomes. The grant facilitator will be charged with the responsibilities of collecting data as well as to disaggregate coalition data to develop reports for stakeholder presentations. These statements provide strong evidence of the Coalitions intent to be accountable and transparent of how grant funds will be used and programs structured and implemented. Presenting yearly Coalition reports to internal and external stakeholders is further evidence to support these statements. Information specifically related to the grant such as meeting minutes, accountability reports, and other performance measures will be available on a Coalition website and updated by the grant facilitator. The website will be used as an open forum for two way communication. Stakeholders will be able to leave comments providing feedback on implementations and updates to the plan. This is a positive response, by effectively providing opportunities for stakeholder participation the applicant is allowing input on an ongoing basis to continuously improve goals and processes.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(3) The applicant was awarded points in the Low range because the plan is too broad to provide meaningful data.

(a) The applicant has identified performance measures along with rationals and subgroups.

(b) The applicant has not provided evidence of rigorous goals or timely and formative information for the assessment of student learning. The plan does not provide evidence of assessment information tailored to the plan.

(c) The applicant 's plan to assess performance measures is general and too broad to obtain meaningful data. Teacher observations will not yield tangible data on a consistent basis.

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

The applicant scores in the High range because the plan includes ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of investments.

The plan calls for engaging teachers in the evaluation of the effectiveness of PD by using a model which provides feedback on progress toward project goals. The model will incorporate Classroom Walkthrough processes along with "Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation Process" to aid with timely and regular feedback. Pd effectiveness will be publicly shared by the creation of a Coalition Report Card modeled after the State Report card. This is positive because the format is fashioned after a familiar State report.

The coalition states that it "recognizes accountability in regard to demonstrating a "return" on technology investment." Therefore they will look at the success of personalized learning environments including end products resulting from the use of content standards and technology integration as well as collaborative communications and critical thinking,

which is its goal. A rubric which displays impacts of technology use have been provided and is divided into five stages for level of effectiveness: Effective Practice, Educator Proficiency, Robust Access, Anywhere, Anytime, Digital Equity and Vision, systems and Leadership. This tool will elicit technology usage from teachers as well as evaluate the level at which they implore students to use it and is a good strategy for implementation of the use and evaluation of return on investment.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's score ranged in the area of Medium because they delineated project goals for yearly expenditures. The applicant's plan provided evidence that funds will be available for "ongoing grant projects". However, it is unclear which projects will be considered ongoing.</p> <p>The applicant is a Coalition of districts which operate using local and state funds. They do not have available funds for implementing a virtual platform to facilitate project orientated personalized learning modules. The applicant did not provide evidence of other funds available. There are thirteen rural districts (LEAs) comprised in this Coalition which will use the RTT-D funds to implement and support their projects. A needs assessment table has been included in the Appendix regarding existing project orientated student driven programs. This inventory revealed that there are not any significant number of projects in the Coalition. This provided valuable information for the formulation of goals related to the plan.</p> <p>The funds being requested by the Coalition are reasonable and sufficient to support the development of the plan. The budget table includes an overall summary of expenditures for development and implantation of the plan. The rationale for investments is included in the plan and centers around providing access to technology for All students and embedded PD to support teachers and staff along with evaluations of the process and implementation. Goals for student progression and benchmark data will provide effective feedback for stakeholders.</p> <p>Line items on the budget Direct Costs include: Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, supplies, Contractual, Training Stipends and Other. Indirect costs approved by the State where the Coalition is located are 3.58 which is the current approved rate. There is no evidence of one-time investments. The budget plan also includes a Project List total which equals the total of the Funds Requested. There is no delineation of on-going costs in the plan. However, there Yearly Expenditure breakouts are clearly identified.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan's central focus for sustainability is PD for the improvement of instructional practices over time. Through the use of the TAP model, funds have been allocated to train master and mentor teachers for instructional support. Salary augmentations will be given to teacher trainers who will have more responsibility and authority to train and model instructional practices which will lead to additional work hours over time. All teachers will be eligible for financial rewards. This is a good plan because states have emerging practices regarding merit pay for teachers who work longer hours and have added responsibilities as well as meet specific student outcomes towards growth. This strategy will also promote buy-in of plan goals and outcomes. The plan also has provisions for effective teacher's growth model. Within the structure of the plan are provisions to recruit, develop, and retain highly effective teachers through growth, support, collaboration, and cohesion. These practices will continue after the grant cycle. These are strong statements which will provide the foundational framework to increase teacher capacity to effectively implement the plan.</p> <p>Because of the evidence provided section (F)(2) is awarded points in the High range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Coalition has existing partnerships with community entities. Upward Bound, which provides precollege activities for selected low income students for preparation of college entry and success. Other Coalition partnerships include state agencies related to gaming and fishing. Students have the opportunity to be mentored by industry personnel along with participating in activities related to aquatic life, clean waterways, conservation and stewardship. Pre-school age students are placed in Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters of HIPPPY. This program prepares small children for entry into school as well as assess student readiness. These are positive partnerships which provide connections to community. However, the plan does not articulate how it will partner with post-secondary schools for continued student success beyond high school.

The plan includes three population groups with level desired results: K-2, K-12, and 11 Post High School. The listed intended results and desired results are general without specifications. For example, K-2 type of results include Family and Education with desired results; Family and students familiar with school/entering school ready. This is a weak statement void of specific plan goals as to how expected results will be accomplished. There is no plan for establishing performance measures for these populations or measuring and tracking outcomes.

There is no evidence in the plan to use data to target is resources in order to improve results for participating students with special emphasis on students facing significant challenge.

There is no evidence in the plan to scale the model beyond the participating students or communities in the consortium over time, but there is a provision in the plan to integrate educational services as it relates to the virtual platform to support PLC's and personalized learning environments across the consortium. Which is positive but specific details are not evident.

The plan provides research to support claims that project based learning can develop student's social and emotional skills. This has positive implications. School leadership will involve active participation of school and the community for program planning policies. Common Core Standards which address listening and speaking will provide content criterion of communication collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving. These are positive statements with specific goals for developing student's social and emotional skills.

The Coalition's implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or Cluster meetings as part of TAP/TAP-like model for teacher support and administrator evaluations and disaggregating of NWEA or TIA content data along with stakeholder questionnaire reviews will provide for progress monitoring of data. The plan has listed general on-track indicators with no specific plan of intervention for off track students. These are weak statements to support progress monitoring. Performance measures are not ambitious. Rather they are general statements with no clear plan of actions for achieving specific goals and outcomes.

Competitive Preference Priority has been awarded points in the Medium range because of the above statements.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has did not meet Absolute Priority 1. The applicant's plan did not coherently and comprehensively describe how it will successfully implement the plan based on the core educational assurance area. The plan lacked specific strategies to provide students with ambitious yet achievable goals and details of how personalized learning environments will be created, used and increase student learning. The plan does not effectively address key components of a high quality plan. Student learning projects were not defined with specific, measurable, attainable, timely, and realistic goals. Planning for professional development for increased teacher effectiveness was not clearly aligned with specific outcomes or feedback opportunities for ongoing assessment for improvement. College and career readiness plans were not clearly articulated. Stakeholder participation along with consistent open feedback was addressed but the plan failed to provide evidence of meaningful stakeholder partnerships and opportunities for feedback.

Total	210	122
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