



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1008TX-1 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant submitted a comprehensive description regarding the conditions and demographics of the schools that will serve as the grant recipients. This information was key in establishing the framework for this project. The Applicant's vision was extensive in that the ambitious yet achievable goals were aligned to the four core educational assurance areas as well as the state's goals. This collaborative effort will build the foundation for the work to be done. The Applicant responded with comprehensive details to each core educational assurance area with research based initiatives that are currently implemented and will serve as trajectories for the action plan for the application. The Applicant's vision and appropriate detail were embedded throughout the grant proposal. The Applicant was highly informed of needs and relevant information regarding the target population. The data analysis and proposed intervention were clearly delineated for the district schools. The Project title(PLEX) was designed for the unique needs of small, rural, and geographically isolated communities. The approach to this initiative because of its alignment to the state's initiatives would facilitate the integration of personalized learning environments within the targeted high need school districts. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant described a focused process titled " Personal Learning Environments for Generation X (PLEX) which is designed to meet the unique needs of small, rural and geographically isolated communities. It emphasized personalized learning environments within each of the targeted high-need school districts inclusive of the core educational assurance areas. The Applicant provided convincing information to achieve the project goals of accelerating student achievement , deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support based on student academic interests and needs.. The Applicant's application provided a list of schools and students who will be recipients of the grant's activities in compliance with the requirements as outlined in the Grant's notice. The Applicant outlined in chart form: total number of participating students, participating students from low income families, participating students who are high needs students, and participating educators. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant specified in the proposal the need to promote high levels of student achievement in each of its 36 schools districts. The Applicant will begin the initiative in the most high need district. The Applicant's application referenced in detail the use of the district's Education Services Center to support all districts but its ability to provide equitable services and access to schools and staffs in the rural areas is a major challenge. The Applicant provided a comprehensive logic model utilizing PLEX which included all related programs activities, trainings and methodologies to create an effective school turn-around model. The Applicant provided a comprehensive description of using the Individual Student Learning Plan as the major conduit for meeting the LEA -wide reform and change model. The action plan is ambitious yet achievable because of the foundation put in place by the District and the State. The application contained a high quality plan which identified the participating schools, participating students, activities in the action plan, timeframe/duration of each activity, the person 		

or provider responsible for implementation, and the expected outcomes/deliverables.

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

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8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student achievement because of the strong endorsement from the District's and State's collaborative reform efforts.
- The Applicant's proposal included a detailed description of the State's assessment program; State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) which will be used as data sources to make data driven decisions and modifications.
- The Applicant described a strong methodology for using formative and summative data to monitor students' progress and provide indicators for instructional adaptations. This ongoing embedded strategy will help to ensure progress towards goals and targets.
- The Applicant used historical and projected data synthesized and analyzed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to formulate realistic targets in all areas listed in the grant's notice.
- The Applicant used detailed charts and summaries to explain the data in terms of baseline and future targets. This information will provide benchmarks and milestones by which to measure progress. The data is comprehensive in that it explains the following areas: performance on summative assessments, decrease in achievement gaps, increased graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

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	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application indicated a strong prior record of student data which made improvements in student achievement but continued to show achievement gaps. (2009-2012) The performance gaps among the economically disadvantaged which provided strong underpinning for this grant request.
- The Applicant explained the change in the student assessment in the Spring 2012 which will interfere with the four year record, This change will present a challenge to the four year data request; however the Applicant will explore alternate ways to use the data.
- The Applicant's proposal outlined in detail the capability of data driven strategies to provide immediate feedback on performance to teachers, students and parents:
 - Study Island
 - Teas Texas Success
 - Online data sources.
- The Applicant 's evidence supported ongoing technical support to all stakeholders to ensure accessibility and use of data by all stakeholders. The three interventions above have defined specific ways to involve parents and build self advocacy skills in students.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant explained in a comprehensive manner the documents that would ensure the highest level of transparency.
- The Applicant's District makes available for public access online and in hard copies to each school the following:
 - Actual personnel salaries for all school staffs -instructional and support-based on the US Census Bureau Classification used in the F-33 survey;
 - Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff;
 - Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers;
 - Actual non personnel expenditures at the school level.
- In addition to the requirements in the grant notification, the Texas Education Agency releases an Academic Excellence Indicator System report which shares budget totals divided among specific programs such as Bilingual education,

Career/Technical education, Accelerated Education, Gifted/Talented Education, Regular Education, Special education, Athletics/Related Activities and High School Allotment. Further transparency is shown through school numbers and percentages, district percentages, and state percentages for comparison.

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

- The Applicant's LEA has demonstrated a high level of commitment to provide the necessary resources and tools to implement its Turnaround model.
- The Applicant's proposal provided a descriptive narrative of the Educational Services Center's role in turning schools around. The Services Center is equipped to engage the target population in problem-solving and shared decision making. The ESC 5 formed a viable partnership with the Texas Center for District and School Support and will serve as a single point of contact for district and school improvement under both the state and federal accountability provisions.
- The Applicant presented convincing information that assures Region 5 ESC has sufficient autonomy under Texas legal, statutory and regulatory requirement to implement "Personalized Learning Environment. These assurances will support the District in meeting the goals of the grant's notice.

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

- The Applicant presented extensive data and documentation that illustrated a high level of stakeholder engagement and support. Copies of timelines and meeting signatures are included in the Appendix.
- The Applicant used design teams made up of all major stakeholders inclusive of teachers to provide input into the development of the application. Three mayors from various communities provided feedback and input into the plan as well.
- The Applicant submitted multiple letters of support from major stakeholders from the various communities. There was a letter from the Teachers' Union stating that they had ten days to review the plan.

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

- The Applicant's proposal described a high quality plan inclusive of a comprehensive needs assessment and data analysis to identify needs and gaps of the targeted schools. The high quality plan as described is reasonable and achievable. The plan includes a logic theory that is focused and can be monitored.
- The Applicant's application provided a detailed plan assigning a "3-D Triage Team" to support needs in the small rural districts to ensure the implementation and mastery of the core educational goal areas.
- The Applicant's application included a comprehensive timeline with new or current PLEX activities with expected outcomes/deliverables and persons responsible for implementation.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant submitted a comprehensive and detailed plan to support all students being college - and career -ready.
- The Applicant's application was extensive in the combination of educational technologies, evidence - based instructional tools, interventions and intensive professional development for teachers to ensure that all students have access to quality instruction.
- The Applicant's initiative has a focus for each student creating a Personal Learning Plan which is based on individual student's identified needs.
- The Applicant's application outlines a high quality Professional Development Plan which is based on teachers' needs as relevant to what is needed to ensure meeting all the goals of the reform.
- The Applicant's application include a high quality plan to deepen students interests and to foster parent/student

interactions.

- The Applicant's application outlines a comprehensive plan to ensure that the targeted districts has the personal technology devices and human resources to ensure success. The plan is ambitious; however, achievable.
- The applicant's application includes a sound rationale for a focus on learning environments and identified research-based supports such as Positive Behavioral supports (PBS), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the concept of 3-D Triage Teams.
- The Applicant's application is innovative in its proposed linkages to connect current District initiatives to digital learning which is aligned to the College Career Readiness standards.
- The Applicant's application described a detailed process to build ongoing and regular feedback which will guide the instructional focus for teachers and the necessary update information for students to modify his learning plans.
- The Applicant's application had a major focus on utilization of data in an ongoing way. The professional development plan was extensive in identifying training for staff, students, and parents.
- The Applicant's application included a plan description that provides individualized learning opportunities that are research driven and provide immediate feedback on mastery of skills and knowledge for high needs students and students needing possible accommodations..
- The applicant specified with complete details and rationales the work that will engage all stakeholders in this project implementation. The ideas were innovative, yet built on research -based ideologies.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application is comprehensive in identifying and specifying necessary resources for the tasks with the scope of the project.
- The Applicant's application details an innovative link that will join professional peers across the state in exploring evidence-based strategies in instruction and assessments. (Project Share)
- The Applicant's application identifies an online PLC repository to permit teacher to upload successful lessons plans.
- The Applicant's application is comprehensive and thorough in outlining benchmarks/milestones for instruction, assessment revision of students' plans, feedback for parents, and community stakeholders. (This detailed plan is ambitious but, achievable because of many state and district initiatives already in place.)
- The Applicant's application documented a high quality plan to ensure that all targeted school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data and resource to structure learning environments to meet specified goals. Professional development is a key component of the plan and the Applicant will partner with a team of nationally recognized experts to create the 3-D Triage Team who is a group of highly qualified professionals with strong experience in school turnaround to deliver an intensive teacher and administrator training program. This program will provide support, encouragement, and camaraderie among the staff that are currently isolated and unable to access professional development opportunities.
- The application described a rigorous evaluation system for Administrators, Teachers, and Non -Instructional Support Staff. There is a detailed alignment to goals and students' achievement outcomes.
- The Applicant presented a high quality detailed plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The plan addressed facilitating learning environments for teachers and students that would lead to improved academic achievement and increased graduation rates and increased college enrollment. This work aligns directly to the College and Career Ready Standards, having all students be college and career ready. The high quality staff development plan as outlined should increase the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application describes a high quality plan that designates the Region 5 Education Service Center (ESC) as the LEA central office to serve the targeted schools in the application. The organizational infrastructure is likely to ensure success for all students.
- The ESC has already outlined the guidelines, practices, policies and rules that will govern the targeted schools.
- The targeted schools' operations have been designated sufficient autonomy under Texas legal, statutory and regulatory

requirements to fully execute all activities as outlined in the application.

- The applicant's application outlined fully the tenets of all areas to be addressed:
 - Organization of the LEA Central office to provide support and services to participating schools
 - Provision for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery (PLEX).
 - Provision of opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; projects, vocabulary, quizzes, student portfolios and hands on skills demonstration (performance tasks) as well traditional testing methods
 - Provision of learning resources and instruction practices that address all learners including students with disabilities and English learners.
 - The Applicant's information was thorough, convincing, reasonable and likely to yield the defined outcomes and expectations.

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

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application presents a detailed plan that describes fully strategies that will be implemented to ensure access to all stakeholders for learning resources, appropriate levels of technical support, and use of information technology. The Applicant was innovative in getting engagement by its stakeholders: use of Mobile Learning Labs (on busses), purchase of personalized learning devices. Opportunities for extensive training, coaching, and on line support will be available for teachers, staff, students, parents, and community agents. The Applicant was ambitious in developing this area, and used reflective thinking and ideas that are "outside of the box."
- The Applicant's application gives a detailed description of its data warehouse concept and the accessibility steps for each stakeholder group. The data warehouse will provide access to all stakeholders who will be able to obtain successfully appropriate and beneficial data to assist in problem solving challenges and using data to make the most useful decisions.
- The Applicant has a high quality plan in that specific activities, rationales, timelines, persons responsible, and outcomes are defined.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application provided extensive details on the use of an external evaluator and data collection specialist to work with the Project Director to monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of the investments funded by the RttD monies.
- The Applicant's application fully outlined the timeline for feedback and the responsibilities of the assigned partners. This plan is based on a Quarterly Evaluation Report that will include data on the following:
 - Academic indicators
 - School Environment
 - Instructional Effectiveness indicators
 - Professional Development indicators.
- All data will be formatted and analyzed to uncover trends, strengths, gaps and weaknesses. The Applicant's approach to use ongoing assessment data is likely to produce academic improvement and mastery of goals.
- The plan is a high quality plan but I am not convinced that the plan would reach hard to reach parents who may not be accessible through technology.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant specified comprehensive communication and engagement with all stakeholders. The 3-D Triage Team is charged with ensuring that current and accurate information is provided on a daily basis. There was a detailed communication flow and identified responsible personnel.
- The application outlined the assessment and review time frames which was directly interrelated to the communication

flow to ensure timely and prompt responses.

- The Applicant defined comprehensive activities that are ongoing to keep everyone informed. Practices were already established in most cases, but the Applicant crafted specific ones for the RtD components. The application outlined communication strategies with external stakeholders to ensure that the community, parents and local residents are kept informed.

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

- The Applicant presented in comprehensive charts specific information on each of the following components:
 - Rationale for selection of each performance measure;
 - How the measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative information to make appropriate decisions about actions and the Review and Improve Measure.
- The Applicant's high quality plan addressed each grant's notice specification fully. The level of detail provided for each performance measure ensures that the measures are ambitious yet achievable.
- The application outlined each subgroup's expectations/outcomes. The performance measures were clearly stated and included mechanisms for monitoring growth.

The Applicant fully addressed each indicator of this requirement.

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

- The application includes a thorough process for evaluation of the effectiveness of the RtD funds.
- The Applicant's plan of action refers to an external evaluator and data collection specialist to lead the evaluation role.
- The external evaluator and data collection Specialist would work with the Project Manager and the District' Data Team to evaluate all components of the project to determine effectiveness of the components. The high quality plan's characteristics, the performance measures and the evaluation component should lead to improved student achievement and personalized learning environments.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant's application fully identified all funds to support the project, reasonable and sufficient budget requests to support the development and implementation of the project and detailed and thoughtful rationales for investments and priorities. The budget was thoughtful and responsive in addressing the funding needs for implementation of the proposal.
- The Applicant included budget charts, tables, and forms with identification of all funds that will support the project e.g..., external foundation support, LEA, State, and other funding sources. The Applicant in its narrative and the regular budget chart addressed reasonably each component of the plan.
- The Applicant provided a description of the funds, and identification of funds that will be used as a one time investment versus those that are ongoing. There was also information on the sustainability of personalized learning environments. The budget is reasonable and allocated wisely to support the development and implementation of The PLEX application. There is also evidence of spending inclusive of the potential RTTd funding.

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

- - The Applicant's application provided a comprehensive rationale for the sustainability plan which was aligned with the district's plan. The high quality plan encompassed the components that would continue after the grant term. The goals of the grant would continue because they are in alignment with the State. The quarterly monitoring

and evaluation reports would yield valuable information on the the specific timelines, activities and deliverables in terms of changes or adaptations and continuation.

- o The Applicant's Sustainability Plan included the following considerations of one-Time Equipment Purchases and ongoing Professional Development as components that could be sustained through the District's initiatives and funding. The technology would be well established and operating and the staff development could be offered through online access and the "Trainer" of training model.
- o The Applicant presented the following in chart form:
 - Components of the Project,
 - Plans for maintenance of Progress, and
 - Budget Assumptions (The information addressed in these components are of high quality and based on a quality needs assessment.)
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- The Applicant provided a detailed description of the anticipated partnership through Spindle-Top that will serve the targeted population.
- The Applicant provided comprehensive information about the staff that will provide services to meet the basic needs of students to strengthen the support structure for attainment of academic potential.
- The Applicant defined Pre-K -12 educational student populations as the recipients of the services. There was one performance measure that would be applicable to grade spans of: Grades PK - 3; Grades 6 - 8; and Grades 9 - 12. The services of the partnership would address the percentage of students with decreased challenging behaviors and increased pro-social skills using the baseline from 2011-12 Office Referrals.
- The ESC 5 infrastructure will work with other non participating districts to gain perspectives and input for possible future models to address students' and families' needs.
- The Partnership would track selected indicators by tracking behavioral incidents monthly by the Data Collection Specialist.
- The External Evaluator would assist the Data Collection Specialist with the creation of Parent Surveys.
- The Applicant indicated that there would be quarterly project evaluation sessions. Evaluation data will track subgroups and be used to determine the needs for adjustment of or additional services.
- The Applicant's application indicated a process to integrate mental health services into the traditional school day for students. The partnership will also focus outreach to hard-to-reach parents and provide family level supports that impact student success.
- The Applicant presented a high quality plan as to how the Mental Health Providers would collaborate with educators: collaborate with Project Staff on ongoing needs assessments of students; create a decision making process and infrastructure to survey twice annually to identify teachers' comfort level with the process as well as their satisfaction level with services.
- The Applicant made provisions for a quarterly data analysis to guide decision making regarding funds allocated to the proposed model.
- The Applicant included its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measure and desired results.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- The Application fully met the Absolute Priority 1 by developing a comprehensive proposal to address the core educational assurance areas.

The Applicant's application embodied the Absolute Priority 1 edicts throughout the proposal. There was a connectivity and internal flow to the document.

- The Application correlated all existing initiatives with newly defined strategies and activities.
- The development of the application was executed using a collaborative team of various stakeholders. The Appendix included sign in sheets and letters of support.
- The Applicant's goals and objectives were aligned with the District's and State's to ensure a greater degree of successful results.
- The use of the Personal Learning Plans for Students was innovative and appropriate as a reform strategy because it incorporates the core educational assurance areas across all grade levels and contains all features of personalized learning environments.

Total	210	186
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1008TX-2 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Region 5 Education Service Center (ESC) presents a high quality comprehensive reform vision, Personal Learning Environments for Generation X (PLEX), which strongly supports the four core educational assurance areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments. Examples include: implementation of the new STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness), implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI), utilization of online, standardized assessment tools, and the utilization of real-time data to drive personalized instruction.
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success. Examples include, Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum program (DMAC) which includes thirteen web-based software programs and the utilization, by West Hardin ISD, of a school-wide data system called Euphoria.
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals. The Region 5 ESC utilizes Title II funds which increases the number of highly qualified number of teachers and principals. This proposal demonstrates that during the life of the grant the ESC 5 will train 259 educators and administrators.
- Turning around lowest-achieving schools. The applicant describes, with the implementation of PLEX, the much needed guidance and support for its three, relatively inexperienced, superintendents. Additionally, the applicant plans to execute a Training of Trainers (TOT) model and its Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

As a result of these ambitious interventions, ESC will accelerate student learning, deepen student learning, and increase equity through personalized student support.

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

The applicant appropriately selects its three schools districts most in need of targeted interventions. To select these three districts, the ESC justifies its selections by utilizing convincing school report card data, US Census Bureau data, and district-level behavioral and funding level data.

Therefore, the applicant identifies the nine ESC 5 schools that will participate in the proposed PLEX program grant activities.

Lastly, by providing a detailed table, the applicant clearly specifies the total number of participating students, the total number of participating students from low-income families, the total number of participating students who are high-needs students, and the total number of participating educators.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth a high-quality plan describing how its PLEX proposal will be scaled up to all of the ESC 5 schools. The comprehensive strategies include:

- extensive professional development activities conducted on a monthly basis.
- collection and analysis of needs assessment information.
- implementation of focused, evidence-based practices; examples include, Positive Behavior Support, Response to Intervention, and CSCOE-a curriculum management system.
- ambitious new learning opportunities via technology; a unique, innovative example includes mobile learning labs on school buses which will enable students to access technology and to complete homework during morning and afternoon commutes.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a sound vision which is likely to result in improved student learning and performance in each of the following areas:

- Performance on summative assessments. The applicant plans will continue to utilize AYP summative assessments to gauge its performance of summative assessments. The applicant points out that the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in spring of 2012. Therefore, no STAAR data is currently available.
- Decreasing achievement gaps. The applicant presents an ambitious yet achievable plan to decrease achievement gaps. Information is appropriately projected overall and for student subgroups.
- Graduation rates. The applicant presents an ambitious yet achievable plan to increase graduation rates in ESC 5. Information is appropriately projected overall and for a student subgroup. Examples include: 95.7% to 100%, 84% to 89%, and 96% to 100%.
- College enrollment. The applicant presents an ambitious yet achievable plan to increase college enrollment. Information is projected overall only. Examples include: 11% to 32%, 29% to 49%, and 48% to 55%.
- Optional postsecondary degree attainment. The applicant presents an ambitious yet achievable plan to increase postsecondary degree attainment. Information is projected overall only.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Utilizing the results of TAKS, the applicant presents a clear record of success in the past four years. The applicant provides a convincing table which documents its improving student learning outcomes from 2008 through 2011. Again, the new STAAR scores from 2012 are not yet available. Consistent growth is evident from elementary grades, middle school grades, and secondary grades.

Utilizing the results of TAKS, the applicant presents a clear record of ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools for the past three years. The applicant demonstrates significant reforms and improvement in its schools labeled "Academically Unacceptable" by the Texas Education Agency. For example, the applicant documents a range of consistent improvement that spans 7 to 30 points over this time period.

In order to make focused student performance data available to students, educators, and parents have access to its online program called Study Island. Study Island executes the sharing of significant student performance information by

providing data to students, teachers, and parents on a regular basis; these reports inform performance and improves instruction. Another reporting tool, Texas Students Using Curriculum Content to Ensure Sustained Success (Texas SUCCESS) also provides extensive reports to teachers and parents.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The ESC 5 exhibits a high level of transparency because it makes available the following four categories of school-level expenditures:

- Actual personnel salaries for all employees based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances.
- Actual personnel salaries for instructional staff only.
- Actual personnel salaries for teachers only.
- Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

The comprehensive manner in which the applicant makes this information transparent includes: the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report, public access online, and hard copies available at schools. Additionally, the AEIS provides a comprehensive breakdown of programs by reporting school numbers, percentages, district percentages, state percentages for several programs such as: bilingual/ESL education, Career/Technical Education, Accelerated Education, and Special Education.

Therefore, all of the (B)(2) criteria have been met and the applicant receives full points.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The ESC 5 demonstrates evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments in its PLEX proposal in the following ways:

- Efficiently and effectively carrying out mandates from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Legislature.
- ESC 5's divisions of duties include administrative leadership, educational technology and media, special education, instructional services, information management, and business services.
- Formation of a partnership with the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) through the TEA. The TCDSS serves a a single point of contact for school improvement for both state and federal accountability.

Therefore, ESC 5 provides evidence of sufficient autonomy to implement its personalized learning environments program, PLEX.

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

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides comprehensive evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the PLEX proposal. Examples include:

- A thorough description of the involvement of all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, volunteer parents, volunteer students, and business leaders) in the planning and design process of the PLEX proposal. Examples include, design team meetings over a two month period, needs assessments of participating communities, and exploration of services that will address existing gaps.
- Attachment of signature sheets from at least 70 percent of the teachers from participating schools.
- Feedback from mayors from the participating communities.

While there were no letters from parent organizations there was one attached letter of support from a grandparent. Additionally, the applicant provided letters of support from two institutions of higher learning and convincing letters of support from the participating communities.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A high-quality plan requires that the applicant share their goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The applicant shares a high-quality plan for an analysis of their current status in implementing PLEX, a personalized leaning environment program.</p> <p>Their all-inclusive plan for intervention is highlighted by the assembly of an innovative 3-D Triage Team. A 3-D Triage Team will be assigned to each one of the nine participating schools. The appropriate members of the 3-D Triage Team include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESC 5 Turnaround team member • ESC 5 Intervention consultants • ESC 5 teachers and school leaders <p>The applicant's comprehensive plan also includes an in-depth needs assessment for each of the following categories: students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Also, all 3-D Triage Teams will be paired with turnaround experts, certified intervention program trainers, and professional development staff.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a comprehensive approach to learning that engages and empowers all of the high-need students they plan to impact.</p> <p>a) With the support of parents and educators, all students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that what they are learning is key to success. Examples include: goal-setting meetings and the creation of Personal Learning Plans (PLP). • identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college-and career-ready standards. Examples include: state assessment scores, local examinations, and online support and intervention programs. • be involved in deep learning experiences. Examples include: Region 5 cloud-based archives, videoconferencing software, and age-appropriate enrichment and expansion topics. • have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives via the personal technology devices. Examples include: songs of different cultures, photos, drawings, maps, and videoconferencing. • master critical academic content and develop such skills as goal-setting, perseverance, communication. Examples include: PLPs and the implementation of the Positive Behavioral Supports program with fidelity. <p>b) With the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a personalized sequence of instructional content. Examples include: student PLP meetings with both teachers and parents, assessing student progress against state and national standards, and determining short-, mid-, and long-term goals. • a variety of high quality instructional approaches. Examples include: professional development for all educators that address mastering and implementing evidence-based instructional strategies and the implementation of small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, and technology-facilitated instruction. • high quality digital learning. Examples include: research-based math and literacy interventions that are technology-centered and online, credit-bearing high school coursework. • ongoing, regular feedback. Examples include: preparation of educators to make student assessment and monitoring a key component of instruction and students recommended for advanced coursework, enrichment, and extra online learning opportunities to deepen understanding. • accommodations and high-quality strategies for high needs students. Examples include: research-based, standards-aligned online learning programs and selected programs that will track individual progress daily. 		

c) The applicant provides a plan that demonstrates that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students. Examples include: students having access to personal learning devices, online content support, online interventions in core subjects. Additionally, all students will participate in a formal training session when each new technology becomes available.

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

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality proposal for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. This high-quality proposal develops an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and to support student progress by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students.

a) All participating educators engage in training that supports their capacity to:

- support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments. One examples includes: the invitation of nationally recognized turnaround experts to work with PLC leaders in a TOT model,
- adapt content and instruction to provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks. One example includes: the online PLC repository that will allow teachers to upload successful lesson plans in a standardized and easily searchable format, creating a wealth of resources for all teachers in targeted districts and region-wide.
- frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements. One example includes: PLCs and embedded coaching activities.
- improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by feedback provided by teacher and principal evaluation systems. One example includes: training and coaching sessions driven by real-time data illustrating specific gaps and weaknesses in targeted districts, schools, and educators. In addition to teacher and administrator assessment tools, all faculty will complete self-assessment surveys.

b) All participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources. These resources must include:

- actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches. One example includes: the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (thirteen web-based products that identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests.
- high-quality learning resources, including digital resources. Examples include: CIA Alignment, Personal Graduation Plan, State Assessments, Class Notes, Student Success Initiative, and Credit Acquisition Plan.
- Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches. One example includes: the Student Portfolio program to identify the impact of specific programs on student achievement.

c) All participating school leaders have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment. These resources must include:

- information from the district's evaluation system that helps school leaders take steps to improve. One example includes: a four month, in-depth needs assessment that will identify strengths and weaknesses of the school, grade bands, subjects, and educators.
- trainings, systems, and practices to continually improve school progress. One example includes: educators will be continuously working to master best practices and strategies that have been proven to increase student performance and close achievement gaps.

d) The applicant proposes a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including hard-to-staff schools, hard-to-staff subjects, and hard-to-staff specialty areas. Examples include: professional development activities that provide the ESC educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct school turnaround methods, utilization of effective school needs assessments that will provide early and accurate identification of the unique needs of each school and CSCOPE, a curriculum management system that will impact instructional practices in the classroom to improve student performance.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high quality plan to support the project implementation based on the following information:

- The central office provides support and services. Evidence found in the Region 5 Education Service Center office, established in 1965. It plays an integral role and provides essential services to Region 5 as it implements school reform and school improvement. Evidence also includes a dedicated full-time Project Director for the PLEX program. The Project Director will oversee all project-related activities and facilitate communication with building administrators.
- A strong school leadership team with sufficient flexibility and autonomy is exemplified by school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, and school-level budgets.
- Students have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery as evidenced by the Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum program which includes student portfolios and ability for students to "test out" of coursework.
- Students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways as evidenced by continual assessments (homework, projects, vocabulary, quizzes, and hands-on skill demonstration).
- Learning resources and instructional practices that are accessible to all learners as evidenced by the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Project Share, an online repository of successful lesson plans. The implementation of these two strategies uniquely addresses the geographic isolation of this region's educators and students.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality proposal to support project implementation by providing evidence of the appropriate infrastructure in the following ways:

- The applicant will execute a complete plan that ensures that all participating stakeholders have full access to all activities in the PLEX initiative. Innovative examples include, the Mobile Learning Labs which will be placed on school busses because it will provide high-quality educational technology to commuting students and personalized learning devices which will be purchased and will provide both students and parents access to instructional resources.
- The applicant will execute a plan that ensures that all participating stakeholders will have appropriate levels of technical support from the Technology Coordinator and other ESC 5 experts. This will be exemplified by training, coaching, and online support for participating students, parents, teachers, and relevant stakeholders.
- The applicant presents an information technology system that allows parents and students to export their information in an open data format. Examples include: Student Portfolio information technology system, Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum, and the interoperable Texas SUCCESS program.
- The applicant provides a reasonable plan to ensure that the ESC 5 and the schools use interoperable data systems. This is exemplified by the utilization of the TxEIS solution web-based software. This software provides the ability to exchange information and to the the information that has been exchanged.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides comprehensive strategies to continuously improve its proposed project. The applicant's strategies include:

- the appropriate placement of an external evaluator and a data collection specialist to determine ongoing program corrections and improvement.
- the detailed creation of and sharing of monthly reports and Quarterly Evaluation Reports.
- documentation in the form of meeting minutes that will be available to all stakeholders.
- the innovative creation of an Evaluation Committee which will meet quarterly; they plan to share continuous improvement information via district mailings, newsletters, mailings, and at Open House.
- comprehensive data collection for the Quarterly Evaluation Reports; this includes the following: academic indicators,

school environment indicators, instructional effectiveness indicators, and professional development indicators.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of a high-quality plan and strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The plans for ongoing communication is clear, well-explained, and excellent in its depth and breadth. The proposal makes clear the proposed activities, timelines, deliverables, and the responsible parties. Evidence includes:

- Internal stakeholders: Communication is interactive and all-encompassing because there will be daily communication between the Project Director and the 3-D Triage Teams, daily communication between the 3-D Triage Team and the building principals, monthly communication between the PLCs and the 3-D Triage Teams, bi-monthly communication between the principals and the Project Directors, and daily communication between teachers and students.
- External stakeholders: Parents and local residents will receive specific mailings about the PLEX initiative, summaries in regular district communications, links through district websites and hard copies of all evaluation and project modification documents (if desired).

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and, in some instances, by subgroup.

- Application Population: All. The applicant provides a table that presents the number and percentage of participating students whose teacher of record is a highly effective teacher. However, the table does not provide information about highly effective principals, effective teachers, effective principals or subgroups.
- Application Population: Pre-K-3. The applicant provides a table that presents two age-appropriate measures of students' academic growth (TAKS Reading and TAKS Math) and one age-appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth (percentage of students with decreased challenging behaviors).
- Application Population: 4-8. The applicant provides a table that presents the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who are on track to college- and career-readiness. The applicant proposes several grade-appropriate academic leading indicators. The applicant proposes one grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator (6-8) of successful implementation of its plan.
- Application Population: 9-12. The applicant provides a table that provides the number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The applicant provides a table that provides the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness. The applicant provides a table of performance measures that will measure career-readiness in order to assess the number and percentage of participating students who are or are on track to being career-ready TAKS and STAAR assessments). The applicant provides a table that includes both one grade-appropriate academic leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan (example: percentage of college-ready graduates) and one grade-appropriate social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan (example: percentage of students with decreased challenging behaviors).

The applicant provides evidence of a) its rationale for selecting most performance measures; b) leading information about how the applicant will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan, and c) its review process and how it will improve each performance measure over time to gauge implementation progress.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents an extensive, high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD funded activities. Evidence includes:

- Utilization of an external evaluator and data collection specialist who will work directly with the Project Director, the 3-D Triage Teams, and individual administrators.
- Regular comparison of of collected data to baseline data.
- Collection of data to assess the impact of partnerships with Angelina College and Lamar Institute of Technology.
- Creation, distribution, and collection of surveys that measure teacher, student, and parent impact.

The requirements for a high-quality plan are met in the following ways:

- **Goals:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the RTTD funds.
- **Activities:** Increased collaboration, collection of data, measure the fidelity of project activities, and measure the impact on teaching and learning.
- **Timelines:** The applicant presents a solid plan by collecting data initially to establish a baseline; thereafter, collected information will be shared in established quarterly and annual reports.
- **Responsible parties:** Project Director, 3-D Triage Teams, Administrators, Educators, and the External Evaluator.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget identifies RTTD funds in its budget narratives and tables. However, there is no evidence of local, State, or Federal funds to be utilized in this proposal. The applicant addresses funds other than RTTD funds in (F)(2) in reference to sustainability after the life of the grant. However, other funds are not addressed in (F)(1).</p> <p>The budget is feasible, reasonable, and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the PLEX proposal. Evidence includes the fact that their spending is properly aligned with potential RTTD funds. All proposed activities appear to be sufficiently addressed and properly funded.</p> <p>The budget narrative and tables provides information related to the identification of funds that will be used for one-time investments. One example includes the expenses related to technology infrastructure hardware.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the project. Evidence includes: one-time equipment purchases and ongoing professional development both of which will live on in the PLEX communities beyond the life of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant's plan also includes strategies for utilizing local district funds and Title I funds in order to further sustain the PLEX proposal after the term of the project.</p> <p>The plan is thoughtful and logical. Moreover, it addresses the needs of its school district and its students. The applicant fulfills the requirements for a high-quality plan in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals: Sustain the goals beyond the term of the grant. • Activities: Train the Trainer model will help the grant-funded professional development to live on and the partnering mental health agencies will have built sufficient capacity during the term of the grant and will be self-maintained after the term of the grant. • Timelines: Appear to be focused and ongoing and aligned with the proposal. • Responsible parties: Administrators and district leaders, educators, and members of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). <p>The applicant chose not to include the optional three year, post-funding budget.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant proposes a quality plan to integrate resources by providing additional student support.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant provides information about partnerships that are already in place. The existing partnerships include Spindle-Top (West Hardin) and Burke Center (Burkeville and Newton). 2. The applicant provides several population-level desired results for students within the ESC 5. Two examples of these population-level results include: reduce misbehavior each year and increase engagement of hard-to-reach families. 3. The applicant specifies how the PLEX proposal will: a) Track selected indicators by collecting office referrals for behavioral incidents and parent surveys; b) use data to target its resources as evidenced by project evaluation sessions that will occur on a quarterly basis; c) develop a strategy to scale the PLEX model beyond the participating students by working with non-participating districts to create similar mental health partnerships; d) improve results over time as evidenced by providing in-school access to mental health resources thus providing needed support and services. 4. The applicant describes how the partnership would integrate education and other services for participating students. The primary strategies are specified in the following ways: by the integration of mental health services into the traditional school day, connecting with hard-to-reach parents, and providing family-level supports that impact student success. 5. The applicant describes how the partnership would build the capacity of staff by providing them with tools and supports to: a) assess the needs and assets of participating students by providing in-school mental health providers and providing opportunities for the mental health providers to meet regularly with educators; b) identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community by providing wraparound services for students and families; c) create a decision-making process to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the needs of participating students which are exemplified by training educators to identify high-risk behavior and creating satisfaction surveys for teachers, students, and families; d) routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing it plan to maximize impact which is exemplified by formal assessments which will occur at least one per quarter. 6. The applicant identifies ambitious yet achievable performance measures. The applicant describes its performance measures which include students from Pre-K through 12th-grade with both educational and family-impact results focused on the improvement of student behavior 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a very well written and thoughtful proposal for implementing personalized learning environments for its highest-needs students. The proposal presents unique ideas that fulfill the needs of its rural students- -for example, the placement of mobile learning labs on its school buses.

This proposed project brings to life the spirit and intent of Absolute Priority 1 throughout this proposal. This proposal provides innovative activities, strategies, tools, and ongoing supports that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.

The proposal reaches out to all of its stakeholders by including them during the creation of the proposal and in the planned implementation of the proposal. The applicant plans to partner with mental health providers, to provide wrap-around services for their students and families, and to make their schools more welcoming places.

The applicant creates a sound argument that its proposed plan will impact the rates at which students graduate from high school and, ultimately, prepare for college and/or careers. Additionally, student achievement will be positively impacted by the ideas in this proposal.

Total	210	209
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1008TX-3 for Region 5 Education Service Center

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The reform vision presented is comprehensive and coherent. It builds on the districts' current work in the four core educational assurance areas. It articulates a clear and very credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support.</p> <p>In adopting assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, the consortium has adopted an RTI (Response to Intervention) system that will be implemented with fidelity upon with the implementation of PLEX. Integration of the Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities will be implemented. In addition, the LEAs in the consortium have begun implementing STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness). The vision includes quality plans to adopt and fully implement these assessments.</p> <p>Building Data Systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction fully addressed with a quality response - it will include adoption and implementation of Data Management of Assessment and Curriculum, which includes 13 products to be able to provide assessment and growth data to all internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Access to turnaround experts, School Level Needs Assessments, and Region 5's turnaround team will enable the consortium to apply resources toward Turning Around its Lowest-Achieving Schools. The vision includes comprehensive and robust plans to work toward achieving this goal.</p> <p>Additional funding through RTT-D will enhance the intensity of the professional development and Title II, Part-A hiring and retention strategies to Improve Recruiting, Developing, Rewarding and Retaining Effective Teachers and Principals. The vision details plans to support existing educators and implement services through the 3-D Triage Team.</p> <p>Personal Learning for Generation X has addressed all of the four core educational assurance areas in a high quality manner. A score of 10 was assigned.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All of the elements are addressed and met. A score of 10 is assigned. 10</p> <p>(a) The applicant used U.S. Census Bureau and state educational data to select schools to participate. The schools collectively meet the eligibility requirements - there are over 2,000 students in the consortium and the percentage of low income students meets eligibility. The table and data are described clearly and coherently.</p> <p>(b) There is a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities. The table and data are described clearly and coherently.</p> <p>(c) The total number of participating students , participating students from low-income families, participating students</p>		

who are high-need students , and participating educators are all listed in a table and meet the eligibilty requirements. The table and data are described clearly and coherently.

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

The applicant includes the elements of a high-quality plan, including goals, activities, deliverables and timelines and parties responsible. The plan describes how the proposal will be scaled up. The plan also addresses how student learning outcomes will be improved.

The goal and its rationale is stated with clarity - "Improve outcomes for students in higherst-need, lowest performing districts, applying long-term solutions that can be replicated successfully in all districts in Region 5 and beyond"

Deliverables, under the heading "Expected Outcomes" are clearly stated - the expectations of ESC Team Members, teacher effectiveness, student learning, and social networks listed in detail, clearly and concisely.

Activities such as Training of Trainers, adoption of effective school needs assessments, individual coaching and mobile learning labs support the vision and LEA-wide reform goals. The activities are detailed and provide a clear connection to the vision.

Timelines are very reasonable and realistic, outlining the expected time to complete each of the deliverables.

The plan in high-quality, connecting very well with the vision and providing ambitious yet achievable activities and a timeline for completion. A score of 10 was awarded.

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

The applicant's goals are ambitious and attainable. As required, the charts give the state ESEA targets and the schools' baseline data, allowing for the comparision of local targets to the state targets. The annual goals are ambitious yet achievable. Specifically, the incremental increases year-to-year show that the improvement will be steady and reasonable. The table clearly defines the methodology and rationale for each goal area.

The data is complete and explains all four of the following elements:

- (a) Performance on summative assessments is ambitious yet achievable, brining the schools in the project up to or exceeding the rates of the state.
- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps - gaps between state results and school results were used, and the applicant proposes a very reasonable approach to closing the achievement gap, including that the first 3-4 years the achievement gap will still be in negative terms, decreasing that number at a reasonable amount each year.
- (c) The applicant proposes to increase graduation rates to 100% at two of its schools, which is very ambitious. The incremental increases year-to-year are reasonable and achievable, making this goal achievable.
- (d) College enrollment rate increases are very ambitious yet achievable. The percentages will surpass the state rates, which is agressive.
- (e) The optional element of Postsecondary degree attainment was also addressed, although it could only be addressed at the regional level.

The responses were complete and very well organized.

All of the components of the critera were addressed in a high-quality manner. A score of 10 has been assigned.

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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium has shown a clear record of success in the past four years in closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and those who are not. The evidence of this is clear in charts that present the data in a clear and concise way.</p> <p>a) Evidence of improving student learning outcomes and closing the achievement gap by raising student achievement and increases in high school graduation rates is shown in the detailed tables. There has been growth in almost every student achievement area that has sometimes exceeded 30 points. The percentage of students meeting standards on all tests has increased over the time period at close to the same rates for both all students and educational disadvantaged students, indicating that the achievement gap is closing.</p> <p>b) The applicant shows ambitious and significant reforms in other schools within Region 5 that it has worked with, implementing a Teacher Induction program, tutoring programs and technology programs, bringing other schools from unacceptable (as determined by the state of Texas) to acceptable. This indicates that the applicant (ESC5) has a track record of ambitious and significant reforms - for example, their teacher induction initiative at Beaumont Academy resulted in 94% of teachers being retained, Cognitive Tutor program demonstrates 85% better student performance on complex math problem-solving.</p> <p>c) Student performance data is available to students, educators and parents in real-time, making it a quality program. Parents can see performance data on a daily or weekly basis, students receive feedback about their performance in real-time, making the system integral to the project.</p> <p>There is a clear record of success in the past four years, with quality data to substantiate it. Ambitious and significant reforms have been made by the applicant within the schools in the project, and in other districts within the region. There is a high-quality system in place to provide students, parents and educators with student performance data. The applicant details its progress in bringing about reform in detailed charts, using quality data. Since college enrollment data was not presented in (a), one point was deducted.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evidence presented shows that there is a high level of transparency in presenting a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances; b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.</p> <p>The applicant uses the Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System report, which provides information that addresses not only personnel salaries and expenditures but also shows budget totals by specific programs. The information is made public by the state and is available by school. The criteria has been met and the evidence is sufficient to show this, so a score of 5 has been assigned.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evidence is weak to support this criteria. The applicant states that it is working with TCDSS to implement programs and that it has autonomy. Also, the applicant states in a single sentence that "Region 5 Education Service Center" has sufficient autonomy under Texas legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the Personalized Learning environments described herein". There is little evidence to substantiate the claim, and the applicant's response was in the medium range so a 3 was assigned.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

(a) The application shows evidence of a description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and - all groups were represented. There are sign-in sheets for teacher attendees at the planning meetings. The planning for the application was over a 2-month period, allowing for feedback after each meeting. Meetings were conducted with community members, parents, student volunteers and other stakeholders, ensuring that all groups were represented in the development of the proposal.

(ii) There is evidence that close to 100% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal (see sign-in sheets for planning meetings)

(b) Letters of support from community organizations, churches, business show enthusiasm and support for the project. The letters of support are varied, there are a significant number of them, and they show solid support.

All of the elements of this criteria were met with quality responses, and the applicant provided quality information. A score of 10 was awarded.

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

A high quality plan has been presented, which contains goals and their rationale, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties.

The goal of the applicant is clearly stated: Improve student outcomes for students in highest-need, lowest performing districts, applying long-term solutions that can be replicated successfully in all districts in Region 5 and beyond. The rationale for the goal is self explanatory.

The needs are clearly identified in a table, such as lack professional development opportunities, lack of updated technologies, students underperform on state assessments. The project components to "solve" the needs is also outlined in the table.

The activities, including professional development, implementation of evidence-based practices and programs, and increasing learning opportunities through technology are listed in the table, and the specific details for each of the activities is listed. The activities are high-quality, specifically the activities for professional development that provide "Train the Trainers" sessions, "Student Motivation", and the conducting of individual school needs assessments (which includes parents). The mobile technology learning labs is especially notable and the plan to carry that out is ambitious yet achievable. The implementation of the 3-D Triage team, paired with turnaround experts, is evidence of the applicant's commitment to complete aggressive reform.

The outcomes, or deliverables, for each of the needs and activities are clearly listed. All of the outcomes tie back to the vision, academic improvement, assessments and sustainability - and all specifically tie to personalized learning.

The timelines for the completion of the activities is reasonable and ambitious. The bulk of the activities will be implemented within the first year, which indicates a high-quality plan is in place to support such an aggressive timeline.

The applicant addresses providing an analysis of the current status in proposing to form teams, along with outside experts, to conduct in-depth needs assessments.

Some needs have already been identified, and a logic model with all of the components of a high quality plan was presented to address them.

The response was well written and the plan is comprehensive and ambitious. A score of 5 was assigned.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence that this plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that

enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs.

(a) With the support of parents and educators, all students—

(i) All students are involved in a planning session, along with parents and teachers, that enables them to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;

(ii) Students create personalized learning plans at the beginning of the year with the support of their parents and teachers that helps them identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and/or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, helps them to understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measures progress toward those goals with twice annual updates with parents and monthly updates with teachers.

(iii) The plan includes the expansion of digital learning opportunities that will enable students to choose areas of study according to their interests, enabling students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest;

(iv) Through the expanded digital learning opportunities students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning

(v) Through technology applications, digital content, ongoing training and personalized learning plans, students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving;

(b) The following shows evidence that, with the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to—

(i) Through the development of a personalized learning plan, which the student develops with the support of parents and teachers, and is reviewed twice annually, a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals is developed, ensuring that he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments will be implemented as part of the plan, including small and large group instruction, student-led learning, technology-facilitated instruction. These will be based on evidence-based instructional strategies.

(iii) The applicant's plan will ensure high-quality content, including digital learning content through the adoption of technology-centered math and literacy interventions and other digital content, ensuring through needs analyses that the curricula is aligned with state and federal standards, including college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements

(iv) There is evidence that the plan includes ongoing and regular feedback

(A) Students' personal learning plans are updated monthly (in addition to the twice-annual meeting with parents). Interventions are recommended from this data - including math and reading tutoring. Recommendations are also made from this data regarding advanced and college classes. The applicant uses the state's STARR system to ensure that students are working toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements

(B) Personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and available content, instructional approaches, and supports are provided when the plan is updated monthly (or before if needed). Student recommendations such as advanced classes, interventions and tutoring are made from the personalized learning plans.

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students will be in the form of online learning programs to be integrated into schools to enhance core content and provide individualized learning opportunities. Teachers will integrate evidence-based best practices for promoting high standards of learning among high-need, high-poverty youth.

(c) There is evidence that mechanisms will be in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Educators will be trained on all technology and students will be trained each time a new application or device is introduced. Educators will

continually provide instruction on use of tools.

A high-quality plan requires goals and their rationale (which is present and high-quality), activities (which are present and high-quality), deliverables (medium-quality) and timelines (not included) and parties responsible (medium-quality). A score of 15 was awarded for the completion of a plan that included some high-quality components.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

The plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students through the creation of a partnership between Region5 ESC and nationally recognized leading experts to create the 3-D Triage team, a group of highly qualified professionals with strong experience in successful school turnaround. Literacy, STEM and curricular specialists with ESC-5 will work as part of the Turnaround Team. Project Share will create Texas-supported Professional Learning Communities. All of these provide evidence that the applicant has a high-quality plan to improve learning and teaching. Professional development training will ensure that teachers are well-versed in the use of data for student assessment as well as trained to use the digital content resources. The 3-D Triage team will work with the schools to ensure that ALL curriculum (for all students) is aligned with state standards and federal standards. Through the development of the 3-D Triage Teams and the development of needs assessments for each school, all students will have the support to graduate college-and-career ready.

The plan for teaching and leading is high quality in that it has goals and rationale, activities, deliverables, timelines and responsible parties.

The goal for the project, as stated earlier, is clearly defined.

Activities are specific to increasing and improving student learning outcomes - through professional development (Train the Trainers, Data Analysis and others), implementation of evidence-based practices and programs (PBS, RTI, curriculum management), and new learning opportunities through technology (mobile learning labs, online and extended day learning solutions)

Deliverables are specific to the activities, are reasonable and specific. Teacher effectiveness is improved as a result of the activities, in the form of such deliverables as effective use of curriculum management system, RTI trainings and the formation of PLCs. The timelines are very aggressive yet reasonable, with the majority of the deliverables scheduled to be implemented within the first year.

There are 2 areas that the applicant did not address - specifically (a)(iv) does not address how the LEAs' teacher and principal evaluation systems will be used and (c)(i) does not address individual educator evaluation. 3 points were deducted for failure to include these, for a score of 17.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has submitted what is considered, for the most part, high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

(a) The project's plan will benefit from the organization of the ESC5, which will serve as the Central Office and provide support and services to all participating schools. The resources that will be provided as part of the plan include 14 staff members that will be part of the 3-D Triage Team, a project director and a grant manager. The districts will also benefit from the services provided by the ESC's business department.

(b) The applicant's response is unclear regarding providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models,

roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets. The response states that ESC5 has autonomy to implement the personalized learning plans, and that 3-D Triage Teams will "work with" superintendents to promote student achievement through flexibility and autonomy. It is unclear whether or not the districts have autonomy over the required categories.

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic will be allowed through policies that would allow students to "test out" and accelerate their pace of study. Parents would also be able to request accelerated study. Performance on standardized tests or through project-based performance will demonstrate students' mastery.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways will be the topic that will be presented at length to educators and supported through the efforts of coaches. Continual assessments will be administered to students that include homework, projects, vocabulary, quizzes and student portfolios. Varying assessment processes will allow all students to demonstrate mastery.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners will be accomplished through providing teachers access to Project Share, an online repository for successful lesson plans. PLCs will also allow educators to access new and expanded ideas. Technology opportunities will expand online learning through evidence-based intervention programs.

The plan is high-quality in that it provides resources from the ESC5 to the districts and is well-organized to undertake the project. The autonomy necessary at the LEA level is not conclusive from the applicant's response and 2 points were deducted accordingly. The plan is high-quality in its response to students mastering standards in multiple ways and multiple times. (e) does not address specifically how disabled and English learners would be served and is weak in evidence.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A high-quality plan will have goals and rationale (rated high), activities (high), timelines (not evident), deliverables (medium) and parties responsible (medium). The score assigned was 8, which is a "low high" score.

(a) All participating students, parents, educators,, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal through mobile learning labs on busses, student check-out of computers and personal learning devices (that will also give parents access). Educators will also have access to personal learning devices outside of school.

(b) Ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support will be accomplished through extensive training, coaching and online support. Educators will be able to utilize online peer support through a PLC network, students will be trained by teachers and parents will be trained by teachers and administrators in the evenings.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems - students will use a student portfolio program that allows parents and students to export their information into other electronic learning systems, including Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum and Texas SUCCESS program.

(d) The project will utilize the ESC's School Management Software system, with is an interoperable data system, which will provide quality data and administrative services.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan. The plan includes evidence of timely and regular feedback on progress through quarterly evaluation reports, that are shared with 3-D Triage Teams, presented to

evaluation committees, presented to all stakeholders including parents, students, educators and others. At every step of the evaluation process there is an opportunity for all stakeholders and team members to recommend improvements. Plans will be made and campus-specific Needs Assessments developed as a result.

The high quality response allows for continuous improvement - evidence is supplied through a plan that includes all of the elements. A score of 15 is assigned.

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

There are high-quality and effective strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Communications between internal stakeholders occur daily in most instances and monthly for teachers. Constant communication will remain with external stakeholders, specifically the parents and community, are up-to-date on the progress of the project, including mailings, postings to the project website and summaries in district communications.

The response is complete and ensures high-quality communication. A score of 5 was assigned.

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

The performance measures in the plan are ambitious yet achievable performance measures, are presented overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance meas

The performance measures in the plan are ambitious yet achievable performance measures, are presented overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The performance measures and their rationale tie-in very well with the vision. The rationale for each performance measure is detailed and explains how each ties in with state assessments and federal Common Core Standards.

Especially impressive are the performance measures for grades 9-12 - specifically the broad array of measures - challenging behavior decreases, pro-social skills increases. The increase/decrease in these performance measures is aggressive, yet the plan is achievable.

(a) The applicant responded with a complete and detailed rationale for selecting every measure, and the performance measures tie in

(b) There is a complete and detailed explanation for every measure explaining how it will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information

(c) The applicant's responses to how it will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress is detailed - providing for leadership to utilize a variety of benchmark measures and tools to attain the goals.

The applicant provided a high-quality approach to assessing the effectiveness of the project implementation and effectiveness through detailed, well-organized tables and rationale for each performance measure.

A score of 5 was awarded for the quality response.

ures.

(a) The applicant responded with a complete and detailed rationale for selecting every measure, and the performance measures tie in

(b) There is a complete and detailed explanation for every measure explaining how it will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information

(c) The applicant's response to how it will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress is detailed.

The response is very complete, ambitious yet achievable. All of the elements were addressed with complete, quality details. A score of 5 was assigned.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project will evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities through the utilization of an external evaluator. The approach to evaluating the effectiveness of investments is high-quality. This is seen through the discussion of the evaluator's charge to determine the fiscal impact of PLEX activities, structures and programs. The data collection specialist will be granted full access to all elements of data to be able to work with leaders and the external evaluator. The applicant's response fully addresses, in a quality manner, plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the project at all phases - a score of 5 was assigned.</p>		

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>(a) The application does not identify all funds that will support the project (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds), which is not a reasonable approach to implementation.</p> <p>(b) The applicant's budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the project, giving sufficient evidence to support the implementation of services and activities.</p> <p>(c) The narrative is insufficient and does not clearly provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, but rather is a cost basis explanation</p> <p>(i) There is no evidence of a description of all of the funds (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds) that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources, which is not a realistic approach to implementation, since the application states that it will continue to use already funded activities that are occurring within the district (which are funded through these funds)</p> <p>(ii) There is no evidence of identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p> <p>Due to the insufficient narrative and the lack of evidence of other funds and identification of one-time investments, 3 points were deducted. The budget itself meets the criteria requirement and is both reasonable and sufficient.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has evidence of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.</p> <p>The goal of the sustainability plan is self-explanatory. The activities are detailed and connect well to the goal. Train the trainer models will allow the ESC to continue to use its internal team. Updated technology will be in place as a result of the first-year investment in laptops and technology infrastructure updates. Mental health services will remain in place as part of the plan through the development and implementation of a service model. The deliverables listed in the desired results in a clearly defined chart - including both educational and family outcomes. The sustainability plan connects very well to the vision. The timeline for the implementation of the sustainability plan is post-award period, but has components that will be built-up during the performance period of the award.</p> <p>The plan includes evidence of support from federal and local sources and financial support. The plan includes a budget with budget assumptions, potential sources and use of funds for the post-award period. The sustainability plan is realistic and well thought out. It is detailed and provides for continuation of the PLEX program after the project ends. A score of 10 was assigned.</p>		
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high quality description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with mental health providers, which give evidence of a robust partnership.

The population-level desired result not only aligns with the broader proposal, but aligns specifically with one of the performance measures. The proposal includes both educational and family results, as required.

The plan will track the selected indicators that measure each result through the use of state and local assessment data. Through personalized learning plans, all stakeholders, including parents, teachers and educators will be able to access the data and use it to improve student learning. All students, including those with disabilities, will have personalized learning plans.

The plan will use RT-3 turnaround teams to assess student-level and school-level data and improve student learning. All students within the schools are participating students, including those with significant challenges, so the assessment of this data will be applied to all. Collaboration with stakeholders includes the involvement of parents at the initial student learning plan development meeting at the beginning of the year as well as at any time during the school year thereafter. Students are also involved in the development and assessment of their plan, in order to understand the importance and the plan's relationship to college and career readiness.

The ESC-5 region has many other districts and schools within its area, and the consortium only includes a small number of them. The applicant gives evidence that lesson plans and best practices, among other deliverables, will be disseminated and shared within the region as a whole. The best practices and activities will be shared at the state level as well.

The plan shows complete details regarding how it will improve results over time, with ambitious and reasonable performance measures and a plan that has measurable and accountable deliverables and timelines.

The implementation plan is well documented and very specific, giving specific activities, outcomes and persons responsible, which indicates their commitment to the project.

The partnership would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to be able to assess individual students and needs assessments will be performed at several steps in the implementation, and continuous improvement is supported through professional learning communities, the SHARE program and other professional development opportunities for teachers. The resources that are available in the community are also assessed and a partner has been identified that has goals aligned with the project vision. Surveys will be administered twice annually. Engagement with families of participating students will be accomplished through the involvement of families in the mental health services provided.

The performance measures for the proposed population-level students are well designed and in full alignment with the project and the vision, as they would provide a valuable tool for the applicant to reduce behavior-related referrals and other mental health tools to enhance PBS.

The partnership is well defined and the plan is excellent. The partnership will enhance the project and the services are sustainable after the project period ends. The high quality partnership described is awarded a score of 10.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has submitted an outstanding proposal that coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. The applicant's plan will allow for the creation of learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through the establishment of personalized learning. This includes tools, supports and

alignment with college-and-career ready standards. This also includes graduation requirements. The plan is designed to accelerate student learning and addresses all of the tools and implementation processes required to do so. Achievement gaps would be decreased under the plan and student learning would be based on student interests. The project vision is excellently communicated and the proposal as a whole meets absolute priority 1.

Total	210	186
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