



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0429WV-1 for Kanawha County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Kanawha County Schools builds on the core educational assurance areas in all areas except it did not fully describe how it will reward, retain, and promote effective teachers in hard to staff schools. The vision of reform for college and workplace standards is clearly presented. It will address equity by support to special needs students into work placements. It will work to deepen learning with dual enrollment course offerings for highs schools and GED technology-based classes. Career Plus, an off-track monitoring system at 9th grade, along with a clear and consistent focus in the narrative on dropout services indicates this proposal has a strong response to comprehensive reform.</p> <p>KCS vision is driven by its success in managing dropout programs. The experienced leadership in building data systems to assist schools to better monitor dropout, and its recent history in turning-around schools at six sites strengthens, makes the visionary reform potential and powerful.</p> <p>However, one drawback is that the KCS vision of reform addresses only math and developing school leaders. For math, KCS believes supporting scholarships for two teachers to earn college certification is important; however, this does not clearly address how it will help to develop and reward effective teacher and principals where there are most needed. Nor does it begin to refine its vision along with current college tuition increases. During these hard times, in fact, a full-tuition scholarships may limit the delivery of a critical program. Also, although KCS expressed success in Leadership Academy, it did not describe how it will address areas of hard to staff schools and subject areas beyond mathematics in this vision statement.</p> <p>An additional notable strength in the vision statement concerns how it will increase equity through personalized learning, grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interest. This is addressed squarely with a consistent focus on special education, high school drop-outs at transitions periods, and it approach to build programs that help schools track and retain students. There are supports to deepen learning such as dual enrollment, personalized learning plans and GED curricula. Here both individual and common tasks are underscored in the vision of reform.</p> <p>A score of high at the lower range was awarded for a very accomplished vision noting only that the hard to staff and content-area teacher programs and promoting and retaining effective educators were notably absent.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS selected grade bands six through twelve in schools where at least 40% of the enrolled students were from low-income families. The process to select the schools ensured meeting the competition's eligibility requirement, because across all selected schools, together almost 44% are low income. Two schools were not at 40% and the table shows that all schools in the district with these grade bands were selected. The applicant provided a list of the 24 participating schools, number and percent qualified as low income students, and high-need (of a total 13,605 participating students). There are 1,081 participating educators. Full points were awarded.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS did not address how it will extend the program into the lower grades across the LEA to establish change beyond the participating schools but this did not detract from the encompassing program of reform. KCS provided a robust logic model that clarifies how the inputs, activities and outputs focus on student-centered, personalized learning with college and career ready standards. In addition, KCS provided a convincing argument that it will generate change across the community with a far-reaching coalition of schools and community stakeholders. There are at least three plans across the proposal with high-</p>		

quality components making a compelling argument that district-wide change beyond the participating schools will take place as presented. The plans provided a thoughtful and calibrated approach to identifying the needs of the students in reading/math, high school graduation, and post-secondary education. The plans addressed the educational, social-emotional and family and community needs including programs outside of the RTT-D such as GEAR UP. There are clear outcomes and timelines for each assurance area. There are data deliverables and the responsible party's components that firmly support success in addressing the 1, 2, and 4 core areas. Overall, there is a solid plan and a compelling theory of action that KCS will reach its outcome goals and impact the wider, broader community as planned. Full points were allotted.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance that are ambitious and achievable based on the data reported for the three of the four required assessment areas.

There are two shortfalls in how the data were described and presented. One, not all data are the same; yet the discussion is that black, low income, and special needs students will consistently score at the basic level. This is not true as noted

- the achievement gap reported for Black students in math, grades 6 through 8 are below the state average
- Black students excel in math in the grades 7, 8, and 9 as much as by increasing 15 points in one year
- ELA by whole group has not fared well with more than half of the data points showing decreases, not increases, as described in the narrative
- The graduation rates show a lack of progress by sub-groups except for special education students. This subgroup plunges 20 points below the average and increased by a promising 3% last year

The point is that the data, in fact, is rich in peaks and valleys and, therefore, the level of analysis in some instances seemed sweeping and inexact. KCS did not consider the data strengths and gapping issues within the subgroups and this should be on useful in the design and the investment of school programs.

A second problem with the data was that the college going rate was not well documented. KCS has seen only a drop in college enrollment and it is unclear what types of college the data sourced, not identifying either four-year or two-year colleges. There is not data reported by subgroup, no means for planning how to obtain the data, and therefore, the 5% increase targeted across each year of the project appeared random and unsubstantiated.

In summary, KCS presented ambitious and achievable goals for three of the four assessed areas with some shortfalls in clear reporting. There are problematic aspects of the data reported for the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals, especially when broken out by subgroup and in the area of college enrollment. This section was scored middle at the upper range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement in mathematics and ELA is unclear. KCS reported an aggregated score for each grade level over four years for mathematics and for ELA. The variation across the years is not presented and the sub-groups are not reported. Therefore, a strong track record in the two content areas, particularly in equity in learning and teaching was not substantiated.

KCS reported a decreased dropout rates over the last four years and stated that this included middle school dropouts. The definition of dropout rate therefore is not in line with the requirements here and therefore progress is not accurately reported.

KCS reported college going rates as lackluster and explained recently capped scholarships and budget woes as the problem. KCS reported the retention of students in the first year of college to be as high as 77%. This is a poor track record in college enrollment and college success over the last four years and KCS did not resolve how it will address reporting by sub-groups for the purposes of the grant.

KCS reported achieving reforms in persistently lowest-achieving schools with transference of principals to other schools in the district's four lowest performing schools. School transformation specialists and program interventions are reported to make a

difference. However, KCS did not report data to substantiate improvement in academic achievement or success in reducing the equity gaps.

KCS makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. For example, teachers use TestMate Clarity to aggregate previous year's student performance in the current year's class. This is useful for growth data analysis. There are state formative tests used to inform the work of teachers and school leaders. The district is piloting new systems and described the utility of the older tools that parents and students use to access student reports, grades, lessons, syllabi, homework assignment and teacher communication. There is an early warning system in place and KCS described a myriad system of tools and approaches to make data available and useful to students, educators and parents to improve participation, instruction, and services.

This section was scored at a middle level because there was not a strong record of progress but at the upper range because of the data availability.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

KCS provided little transparency in its processes, practices, and investments. It does not currently report publically on the sub-criteria of this section for state and local funding levels.

- a. It makes available its personnel salaries by school level for instructional and support staff but it did not state that these reports conform to U.S. Census Bureau's classification.
- b.-c. It stated that it makes available (on its own web page) its salary schedules for instructional only / teachers only through salary schedules; but it does not display actual personnel salaries excepting for new hire's
- d. It does not make available non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

This section was scored at the low level, low range.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

KCS reported that can demonstrate the successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments as described in its proposal. The evidences are cited state education code regulations for assessment, student data tracking, and encouraging higher education systems integration in shared data. Additionally the state education code allows for longitudinal education data systems; special five-year demonstration professional development school projects that exclude requirement of specific appropriations; and a testing ground for innovative graduation programs, incentives, and experimentation with specific interventions. In this way KCS demonstrated that is has the autonomy under state requirements to implement the proposed programs. Full points were allotted.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

KCS reported that there were numerous opportunities for families, teachers, and principals in the participating schools to provide input in the development of the RTT-D proposal. This included parent surveys to assess satisfaction of current programs administered and reported back by teachers. It was noted that data entailed questions about student satisfaction. Title I personnel and principals provided input. It was stated that there was refinement without specifying a process for revising. In addition, outside of documenting the teachers support; processes were described informally with little detail, for example, there were no dates to strengthen the role of feedback and revision processes.

The district is not collective bargaining and reported that 80% of the participating educators were documented as shown on a list of yeas. The two areas that were red flags were Capital High School (which provided only 7 yeas and 77 nays) and George Washington High School (which provided 0 yeas and 53 nays). There is no grounds for support in two of the high schools representing 2,000 (15%) of the total 13,000 students and 97 (8%) of the total 1,081 educators.

The level of support expressed through the support letters, on the other hand, was extensive. The state college, Adult Education Branch of the Department of Education, county organizations, and workforce agencies all provided strong support and many mad suggestions for program components for the RTT-D grant.

RCS provided strong letters of support and documented support at all but two schools. This section was scored a middle level, high range.

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

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

KCS' presentation of its plan of analysis of its current status of implementing personalized learning environments addressed the four core reform areas (the standards and assessments; building data systems; rewarding and retaining effective educators; and turning around lowest-achieving schools).

The needs and gaps did not address depth in learning but it did address relevance; the needs and gaps did not address 21st century technology, but it did recommend a task force to assess and track weaknesses in workforce relevance. The needs and gaps did not address a recommendation for designing educator evaluation systems, but it did recommend "mentor-network matching merging leaders to establish leaders in different focus areas". The weakness noted here is the meaning of the short worded descriptors became lost without a longer narrative text to support them.

So over all the key words and terms used in the high quality plan of analysis, there was not an in-depth focus and, in fact, these unclear approaches were often unrelated to approaches described in the vision section. For example, elementary schools had not been part of the vision before but now the elementary school administration and staff were named as persons responsible for adopting standards. Likewise, the Soft Skills Curriculum was a listed activity and it was a K-12 program.

Furthermore, it was problematic that only middle and elementary schools were the responsible parties; and also that all other responsible parties were medical centers, universities, etc. There was little apparent logic for the plan due to the lack of an organized presentation of related items.

In addition, the initial STEAM program from the vision section was changed to STEM here. The vision of creating a STEAM business with project based learning from the vision section, now appeared to be STEM on-line materials. Therefore, there seemed to be little consistency of the activities and approaches. The plan also suffered from vague dates such as 1 year, 1-2 years, etc.

Overall, the clarity of a coherent analysis was missing from this section. It was scored at the low level in the upper range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

KCS begins to develop a personalized learning environment to provide all students support to graduate college- and career-ready with limited adaptations to what programs are available for in high turn-over schools or a subject such as special education or algebra for sub-groups.

KCS provides a plan that begins to address student and their understanding of learning to accomplish goals, for example, through career exploration and training activities, grades 6-12, STEAM online, dual credit, and some of the programs that introduce job skills at the secondary levels. The idea of high school choice, portals, and middle school design summer academies are all promising ideas. There are not well anchored as implementation activities, however, there are no specific timelines, and unclear program specific goals.

KCS touches on, but does not provide, depth about how it will support students to pursue personalized goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and career graduation requirements. The structure for student learning and achievement of goals measures were not clearly described. For instance, review of the deliverables in the KCS plan named reports, assessment performance, and report cards; but it did not provide information about how students would benefit from these assessments in achieving their goals supported by teachers and parents.

Likewise deepening learning and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives to motivate the student's individual engagement in learning was not addressed in the plan. There was a reference to *weaving academics and career awareness in the youth sports culture*; but there was no description of the particulars of this approach of what weaving academic with the youth sports culture is. It was not connected to a student goal or evaluation method.

Similarly, the plan did not address how students would be able to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. Although KCS

described professional development and common core standards which will address critical content, goal setting, and communications for student learning, there was not a clear structure of course sequences, student workshops, and new courses. Instead there was a list of activities.

In addition, the following elements were not addressed in the plan:

- A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development
- The implementation of program strategies to successfully link high-quality content delivered through a digital learning content
- A cycle or system of ongoing and regular feedback from students between counselors and teachers; including frequently updated and personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills
- Site and program accommodations that include high-quality strategies for high-need students
- KCS mechanisms 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

It was evident that KCS provided a variety of instructional approaches by listing a number of programs and methods associated with program goals. It is also evident that KCS plan to provide a variety of environments for learning as evidenced by the number of community programs, the district focus on leadership development strategies, and teacher professional development. KCS presented strong evidence in the variety of programs and environments for learning. Therefore, this section was scored middle at the lower threshold.

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

20

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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

KCS begins to address a plan to improve learning and teaching through professional development. It was not always clearly stated how the professional development will be personalized (in a personalized learning environment for each teacher to have individual and whole group processes) in order to reach all students (some teachers may have unique needs that should be addressed personally) with support to graduate college- and career-ready. KCS plans to engage teachers in professional development using a professional learning community model to build capacity needed for sustainability. KCS stated that it will be replicable for other districts across the state.

KCS did not include in the plan how it would adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks.

KCS will frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements using the professional learning communities to examine data about student progress. This begins to address how it will approach improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators;

KCS plans to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the Gallup Insight for new teachers and the Principals Assessment Team. The plan did not address frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, and how teachers will address the acceleration of student progress.

KCS will provide a procedure for recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement

KCS provided a plan that begins to address how it will involve all participating educators with access to, and knowledge of tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

- The description of the professional learning communities provide some evidence of actionable information that helps them identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests
- There are a number of high-quality learning resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and the tools to create and share new resources.
- KCS begins to address how it would engage educators in a process to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuous feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. It will provide summative assessments and pre- and post surveys from teachers about their progress.

The plan activities were not closely tied to the narrative. Closing achievement gaps and teacher evaluation system were not discussed in the context of the professional learning communities which was the principal source of professional development.

KCS did not provide a high-quality plan that will increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

This section was scored at the middle in the low range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS provided a District Organization Chart without relating how the central office will serve the targeted schools and assist in implementing personalized learning environments as stipulated in this proposal.</p> <p>Based on statement in the narrative, KCS will provide school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules, but KCS will <i>not</i> provide school leadership teams in participating schools flexibility and autonomy in school personnel decisions. Based on statements in the narrative, KCS will <i>not</i> provide flexibility and autonomy to school leadership teams in participating schools in staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators. Based on statements in the narrative, there will be autonomy in school budgets provided school leadership teams in participating schools.</p> <p>Based on statements in the narrative, KCS will <i>not</i> provide students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, nor on the amount of time spent on a topic.</p> <p>KCS begins to address how it will provide students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. For example, there will be internships, field-based experiential learning, project-based learning, and digital learning opportunities.</p> <p>In addition, KCS will provide learning resources and instructional practices for students with diverse needs, but these resources and practice were not described to be equipped to serve special education students. KCS did not describe that it would provide specialized technology adaptations for the students who are hearing or visually impaired. KCS will address approaches for English learners such as special on-line algebra programs, lexile readers, and smart boards. However, services for English learners were not developed elsewhere in the proposal. KCS did not present a proposal that addressed English learners outside of this required criterion.</p> <p>Overall, KCS provides little evidence that it has a 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. This section was scored at the low level in the upper range</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS did not describe how it would plan to provide comprehensive policies and infrastructure so every student, educator, and each level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) in the proposed project will receive support and resources to ensure that all participants, 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. KCS already provides parent community nights and resource centers at each participating school. Additionally KCS plans to provide additional resources through technology for parents and students that will support school to home communication and learning.</p> <p>KCS has a plan to provide an online curriculum for parents and students to help them plan for key decisions about school programs and roles in learning. KCS plans to provide social media, blogs, and train parents at different events employing technology specialists. KCS described programs and strategies for support in technology. The infrastructure, comprehensive policy, so that every student, educator, and each level of the system in the proposed project receives support was not clearly addressed.</p> <p>KCS described that it currently uses information technology systems that allow integration of third party systems. KCS uses information technology systems that allow parents and students the ability to view and print but it was not clear if it allowed them to export their information in an open data format, and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.</p> <p>KCS described that it would ensure schools use interoperable data systems as defined in this notice. This section was scored at the middle level for providing educators, parents and students platforms for learning and communicating electronically. But it was scored at the lower range for <i>not</i> addressing specifically how it would build the infrastructure and provide comprehensive policies so that every student, educator, and each system-level in the proposed project will receive support.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS identified two elements that it will do to provide feedback on implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will provide activity evaluations, • It will provide periodic reviews on project status <p>KCS did not provide sufficient detail to address a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.</p> <p>KCS did reference that the Project Director would check on the progress monthly with the RTT-D Committee. KCS stated it would report on how the program is meeting monthly and annual objectives and that these periodic reviews and modifications were needed as necessary to improve proficiency levels. Although this was not rigorous, it represents a start toward feedback on implementation. Therefore, a middle score at the low range was allotted.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS described that it will provide a Director to convene a monthly Advisory Council for the RTT-D program. The Council will be made up of key constituents such as educators, parents, students, and community members. KCS will use websites, brochures, and announcements to encourage participation in the Council. However, the KCS plan does not provide a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its program because the measures that will be used (skill tests, credits attempted, etc.) do not inform implementation practices and feedback about progress. There was not a organization structure to provide timely feedback across each site for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders about how the quality of the program implementation. This section was scored low at the high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS does not identify effective and highly effective principals and teachers nor does it provide a high quality plan to define how it will address this requirement. Although the State is implementing a new evaluation system for 2013-14, there was in sufficient information provided to determine if this new system will meet the criteria or not. Therefore, KCS did not provide the required performance measure for all-populations and subgroups.</p> <p>KCS proposes to use student attendance as the K-6 on-track indicator for college and career readiness for participating students by subgroup. It proposes to use state standard test scores for its academic, grade-appropriate leading indicator. KCS did not provide a rationale explaining why it did not provide a specific measure to reflect progress of the program for one grade. It plans to measure all participating students, grades 6-11. KCS will use discipline reports to measure progress in health and social-emotional success. KCS did not provide a justification about discipline reports as a measure of program success to address issues in validity and reliability. For example, multiple measures that vary by characteristics of the subgroups are recommended to avoid confounding outcomes.</p> <p>KCS will compare the number of students completing the FAFSA each year by sub-group. KCS will use ACT test scores and WordKeys assessment scores as indicators of on-track to college and career readiness by sub-groups. KCS did not provide a clear rationale addressing its selection of these measures as required.</p> <p>KCS did not select a grade appropriate academic indicator but instead reported it would use all grade levels (ELA/Math) state standards test scores. It not address the requirement for a grade appropriate academic indicator.</p> <p>KCS will provide discipline reports across grades 9-12 as its measure of improvement in the students' health or social-emotional well being. KCS did not provide a rationale for using a measure of four grade spans instead of a single grade. KCS did not meet the requirements of this measure.</p> <p>KCS described how it would improve the use of its measures over time to include sub-group data which it does not collect currently. It reported that it would transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium of the Common Core Standards.</p> <p>KCS did not provide a theory of action for its implementation success or areas of concern. This section was scored at a mid level, at the lower range.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS provided an approach to evaluate the effectiveness of its program objectives, activities and services using quantitative and qualitative measures and instruments. The approach addressed formative and summative evaluation. It was not clear how it would assess the parent programs and services, the educators' professional development. KCS did not address how it would use the data to provide modification to implementation. It did not provide a decision-making process. This section was scored at the middle level at the lower range.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KCS does not identify all funds that will support the project. It only identifies the funds requested for RTT-D.</p> <p>It is difficult to determine if KCS' budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal because instead of breaking out core program components and provides budget amounts, it breaks the budget in half by proposal pages and provides two large budget figures.</p> <p>The budget narrative provides better detail if only for the personnel, travel, and contractual. However, supplies were did not appear justified in that personal devices for three years were lumped together making it impossible to know what kind of supplies they were.</p> <p>KCS did not provide a rationale for investments and priorities.</p> <p>KCS did provide a description of all of the funds RTT-D and the external foundation support; RCS did not provide LEA, State, and other Federal funds to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources; and</p> <p>KCS did not identify 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>Therefore, this section was allotted medium points at the low range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a high-quality plan in describing sustainability of the project's goals aft goals after the term of the grant including an extensive list of support sources, an Advisory, fundraising activities and these activities are intended to begin early in the life of the grant.</p> <p>The sustainability of the project did not show how it would be built in the schools over time, the programs developed at the sites so that it appears to be a top-down system where the schools that are served are not part of the sustainability program.</p> <p>The plan includes support from State and local government leaders and financial support. There are budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds listed.</p> <p>This section was allotted medium points for not addressing the school sites and building capacity within the resources, programs, procedures, and acquisitions. It was scored at the high end because it addressed the financial support criteria and addressed many of the criteria.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

KCS described its plan to work in partnership with Hope Corporations to establish HOPE Youth and Family Services, in a full service family community schools program. In partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, Mental Health Services, Probation, and others to provide enrichment programs after school, college and career services for 8th – 12th grade students including parent services focused on college readiness for their students. The plan did not address many of the criteria requirements and without program level descriptions in place, the plan lack a coherent foundation.

KCS proposed to use ELA measures to assess the successful implementation of this community schools program education wise. However, this did not seem practical because of confounding whole school effects. Other measures of family and community by grade spans were increases in protective factors (which were not defined). The measures were not broken down by sub-group and this detracts from a rigorous assessment that is aligned with the KCS' RTT-D proposal. Other measures were and decreases in absences and suspensions for all students and this was broken down by subgroup.

KCS did not address break-out data by school sites, nor did it address program level measures, Track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level.

KCS did not describe how it would use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students (as defined in this notice), with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges.

KCS did not describe how it would develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and other communities in the district.

KCS did not describe how it would improve results over time or integrate education and other services; or build the capacity of staff in participating schools.

KCS did not Identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students. This section was scored at the middle level for presenting a viable community supported program, but at the lower range for not providing the details to meet all the criteria.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

KCS is adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in a global economy. The Common Core Standards and Assessment will be in place in 2014 and will be transitioned into the participating schools. It will provide a set a ambitious goals and objectives, implement a number of programs to increase graduation and address underachieving students in the participating schools.

KCS did not provide a description of the educator evaluation systems for the superintendent, the principals or teachers to include student growth measures with three category levels. Currently and for the first year of the proposed program, a single data point from student test scores defines which educators are effective and highly effective. KCS did not meet the absolute priority in this section. Even though KCS expects the state to pioneer a student growth percentile model, the RTT-D requires the applicants to champion this issues in order to qualify for the competition. Leaving it to the chances that the State will carve the way in time (by the second year of the project) and in line with the criteria stipulated is not in line with the intended meaning of core reform.

KCS did not fully address how it will recruit, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals especially where they are most needed. However, it has a plan to recruit, develop, reward, and retain them but the components of the plan were not cohesively and consistently addressed across the proposal. KCS will provide a new teacher evaluation system, will establish a professional learning community for teachers focused on student data, and will design a principal professional development program as well. However, it was not clear how the KCS' RTT-D program would use the evaluation system to inform professional development. KCS did not provide the ambitious and achievable targets for its educators to meet this section of core reform.

KCS has a plan and will continue its work in turning around its lowest performing schools. It replaces administrators and transfers them to other schools. It provides coaching for teachers, and intervention program specialist.

In sum, because KCS did not describe an educator evaluation system in line with the intentions of the national reform, and

also because KCS did not adequately address how it recruits, rewards and retains effective teachers and principals, it did not meet the absolute priority.

Total	210	104
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

KCS clearly proposes a discrete and innovative solution. The optional proposed plan can be replicated in schools across the Nation and is the Franklin Covey's *The Leader in Me* program. The program, which was already implemented in KCS, is designed to develop student's soft-skills (character building and life skills and social-emotional learning. It is described to address self-awareness of skills at the middle and high schools. However, the proposed optional program targets three schools located in another region. The rationale for the subject area and focus was well addressed.

This program has been implemented in KCS in 2010-11 in one elementary school. Considering that RTT-D is planned for the middle and high schools, there was a clear call for KCS to implement this soft-skills program at the current RTT-D or at least at the feeder schools for the RTT-D. There was not reason provided in the narrative why it should be taken to the neighboring regional schools. In this respect, the innovative solution does not support the plan for addressing Absolute Priority 1 because there is less known about the regional schools and the impact for keeping the program in the RTT-D would seem to strengthen and make more powerful the results for the participating schools..

None the less, in the regional area, KCS presented a high-quality plan for how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs is provided following a commercial program that KCS described clearly from the number of training sessions, to the content of the sessions over a three year process, including evaluation procedures focused on building and empowering effective habits across school 11 elementary school sites.

The proposed budget will be adequate to support the development and implementation of the activities and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, (teachers will implement curriculum for their students over three years) design (the program has been reported to significantly decrease the number of students expelled or suspended), and significance of the proposed project activities and the number of students to be served (over 2,000 elementary school students with unknown demographics and school characteristics).

This section was allotted medium points (for not impacting its own service area or justifying why it chose not to impact its service area) at the higher level (for addressing every criteria of the optional budget supplemental section.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0429WV-2 for Kanawha County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A(1)

The application provides a coherent reform vision that is strongly aligned with the four core educational assurance areas, as evidenced in a table in this section. The emphasis of the project is on college and career readiness, particularly the latter with many appropriate activities geared to career exploration. There is also an extensive emphasis on the use of student data (e.g., test scores, attendance, disciplinary actions, progress in credit accumulation toward graduation) to inform teaching and learning for individual students at the LEA's middle and high schools. The inadequacies in this section relate to the areas of increasing teacher effectiveness without sufficient attention to a teacher evaluation process and implementing school turnaround (i.e., the strategy that has been used with SIG grants involved replacement of principals; information regarding other intervention steps was vague).

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

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

A(2)

The application provides a convincing rationale for focusing on middle and high schools reflecting identified need to improve graduation rates and increase the percentage of students enrolling in college. All of the middle and high schools are participating and the application includes a table with the data on students and teachers required in this criterion. The percentage of students from low income families is met or exceeded in nearly every individual school; the overall percentage meets the requirement. The evidence is comprehensive.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A(3)

The application does not include a high quality plan for scaling up the reform effort embodied in the application inasmuch as the entire district enrollment of middle and high school students will participate in the project. The application describes a convincing theory of change that by providing intensive, student-centered personalized learning environments, aligned with college and career ready standards, student outcomes across all subgroups will improve. Scaling up is reflected in the feasible rollout of project components reflected in the implementation schedule included in the high quality plan related to Preparing Students for College and Careers. That plan includes the elements described in the definition of a high quality plan.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

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

A(4)

The application includes feasible goals overall and by student subgroup related to performance on summative assessments (i.e., state assessment), graduation rates, and college enrollment. Several of the goals (e.g., graduation rate and college enrollment) are ambitious (five percent increases annually). The goal on summative assessments in reading and math for each grade level reflects a slight increase in annual performance from the levels achieved in the past. Because each subgroup is projected to attain these same gains on summative assessments, the achievement gaps are retained; this aspect of the application is insufficient. It would, however, be a significant achievement if, as reflected in the applicable chart, all subgroups attain at least a 50 percent proficiency rate (with the single exception of students with disabilities) including the target group of low-income students whose current performance has been well below that rate.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

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



	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B(1)</p> <p>The application provides data reflecting gains made, by grade level, in reading and math on state assessments over the past four years. The limitation to this data is that only one set of scores is provided, rather than year to year statistics. There is a lack of evidence related to closing achievement gaps. The application provides convincing data regarding the increase in graduation rates in each of the past four years. College enrollment data were not provided. The application describes its efforts to achieve significant reforms in its persistently lowest achieving schools (identified by the state) although full descriptions of some of these interventions (e.g., parent/community involvement activities, name brand programs) are sparse. Specific data on improvements in student performance at these schools is not provided in the application. The application documents how student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents to improve participation, instruction, and services in appropriate and various ways. Parents receive annual reports on state assessment results; educators get more in-depth information (e.g., item analysis) to guide instructional planning. Educators have the results of interim benchmark tests to guide decisions about reviewing and re-teaching content. The application also discusses systems to compile other student data related to behavior and report card grades that will be available to all parties, but in this discussion it is unclear whether those systems are future features rather than existing ones.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the middle range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B(2)</p> <p>The matter of making transparent to the public the nature of expenditures, including personnel salaries for schools in the district is undocumented in the application. The application addresses this criterion with a discussion of data presented to the school board regarding actual salaries at the school level but the report to the public is limited to posting salary schedules for staff.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the low range.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B(3)</p> <p>The application provides an adequate description of state statutes relevant to the issue of the LEA having sufficient autonomy and conditions to implement the project, with the following two exceptions. Questions arise about whether, in instances where pilot activities are being currently implemented, those conditions and degree of autonomy extend to regular practice by the LEA. And the application does not document whether, under the state constitution or other legal framework, LEAs are delegated responsibility for basic operational decisions (e.g., scheduling, staff hiring, curriculum) regarding education.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the middle range.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B(4)</p> <p>The application describes its specific and reasonable efforts to engage stakeholders in the development of the proposal. The application documents the ways in which parent feedback on the school programs was solicited, as well as a survey of teachers to help identify both needs and suggestions for addressing those needs. There is documentation of wide support of the project by teachers in the participating schools, with the exception of two schools; the overall percentage, however, was 80 percent. The application documents the considerable level of support for the project received from the larger community, providing a table listing over 20 partners and their respective roles in the project. The application is lacking evidence supporting a statement that outreach was made to faith-based organizations; it is also the case that organizations representative of specific populations (e.g., minority groups) may not have been involved in LEA efforts to build support.</p>		

This criterion was rated in the high range.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

B(5)

The content related to this criterion is only slightly relevant to the requirement for evidence of a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status implementing personalized learning environments. The application does describe needs and gaps upon which the project is based, but the relationship of needs to personalized learning environments is unclear. The high quality plan included in this section relates to the planned activities in the project and is more relevant to Criterion C.

This criterion was rated in the low range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: C(1) The application reflects a clear and strong focus on preparing students to succeed in college and careers. Plans include an extensive array of internship, job shadowing and other experiences that will involve students in deep learning experiences, although evidence of their high quality is limited. The application describes appropriate courses, many using Project-based learning, designed to help students set goals and plan for the future; these courses will convey to students the importance of mastering challenging academic curriculum and the connection to future success in life, as well as provide them with training in the use of tools they can use to track and manage their learning. Project-based learning is also justified as developing skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. Exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives (other than placement in job situations) is unclear. The application includes a high-quality plan (responsive to all required elements) for personalizing learning but the fact that this plan does not identify the LEA with any responsibilities for implementing activities is confusing; those responsible are organizations outside of the LEA so the plan is incomplete in this respect. The plan, as presented, provides a list of activities but is lacking sufficient descriptive information or how these activities are sequenced, or are selected by students. Evidence about the quality of content is not included. The application's discussion of a student's access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development is also unclear. The application describes how students will have timely access to data related to their progress. Missing was whether such feedback included personalized learning recommendations. The application described a number of feasible strategies (e.g., Summer CTE Academy) for meeting the needs of high-need students, particularly low-income students given that group's very high dropout rates. This criterion was rated in the middle range.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: C(2) The application provides a high-quality plan (in terms of including all required elements) for training. The first plan component relates to implementing the Professional Learning Community Model to explore uses of technology in instruction. The application does not provide an adequate description of this component, including how this professional development is to be delivered. The application also neglects to provide detail on how this training is expected to change the nature of instruction and improving opportunities for students to engage in learning experiences tailored to individual needs and interests. The second component, having to do with building data systems that can provide teachers with student-level information as well as access to learning resources, appears appropriate for its intended purpose, although the application does not provide sufficient		

information as to how teachers will be trained to make best use of these data systems. The third component relates to increasing students' exposure to effective teachers. The application describes a strategy of improving the quality of teachers and leaders through professional development (e.g., Administrator classes and Gallup: Teach with your Strengths) but the application lacks sufficient detail about the nature of the professional development (e.g., who will provide it, how will its effects be measured in classroom practice and results). Recruitment of effective teachers and principals is not discussed. A high quality plan responsive to this issue is not included. Reference to relation of professional development to the teacher evaluation system is vague.

This criterion was rated in the low range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: D(1) The application describes how the LEA, through its Project Based Learning initiative, will project opportunities for students to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery; however, the amount of time required to obtain credit cannot be altered due to state law. The application convincingly demonstrates that students will have multiple opportunities (e.g., courses, implementation of e2020 that embodies options for blended or virtual learning) to demonstrate mastery of standards. The application also addresses the need to provide resources that are fully accessible through the implementation of specific programs (e.g., Think Thru Math and Achieve 3000 and other programs that are suitable for students with special needs). It appears that little autonomy is provided the school leadership teams; the district is responsible for hiring and budgeting. The application's description of how the central office is structured to provide support includes an organizational chart but it is lacking a discussion linking that chart to the provision of services. This criterion was rated in the middle range.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: D(2) The application's description of access to content, tools, and resources within and outside schools is thorough. An online program (i.e., Learn 21) is available to students for home use, including a variety of activities (including games) that are aligned to curriculum. A companion program (i.e., Parents 21) is available to parents with activities for helping students. Each school will have a Parent Community Resource Center providing resources. The application describes the use of social media sites to communicate with students, parents, and other stakeholders as well as to solicit feedback on the project. Technical support to students and parents in the use of external resources appears to be limited to hours when technology integration specialists are working and the application lacks specificity on this matter. It appears that the information systems are appropriate for the use of parents and students. This criterion was rated in the high range.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: E(1)		

The application provides only a brief discussion of how progress toward goals and opportunities for ongoing improvements will be conducted; more detail regarding the collection of data, the nature of those data, and how those data will be examined is needed to determine whether a sufficient effort is planned. There are provisions for feedback on all activities, continually updated student data, and regular reviews by the Project Director to inform decisions about making adjustments. The nature of the feedback is not well-specified. It is unclear how the results of professional development will be assessed and used to monitor progress toward project goals and inform ongoing adjustments. While reports on project implementation will be a regular agenda item for the monthly RTT-D Advisory Council (including representatives of the partners, teachers, parents, students, and administrators), it is unclear whether these reports will be shared with the public.

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

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

E(2)

The application discusses a convincing variety of communication strategies for communicating with internal and external stakeholders, including district newsletters, its online calendar and website, as well as press releases. The application was vague as to the nature of the content of the communication so it is unclear whether it will speak to the quality of investments made under the grant.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

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

E(3)

The application satisfies the required number of performance indicators, including the breakouts by grade level and subgroup required under the criterion. The rationale for the choice of indicators (e.g., performance on the state assessment, school attendance, number of days of suspension, number of students taking the ACT, and number of Work Keys tests passed as required for 12th grade completion) is justified and aligned with the nature of the project. The goals appear to be achievable with several being quite ambitious. The application's discussion of how these measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan is sparse but it is obvious that these measures relate well to the project's areas of concern. A discussion of how the measures will be reviewed for their utility is lacking.

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

E(4)

The application includes an extensive design for conducting both formative and summative evaluation activities related to all aspects of student performance and student activities (e.g., performance on summative assessments such as state tests, grades, and course completion data; activities related to college and career planning such as completing the FAFSA, taking the ACT, and participating in education, college and career field trips). The evaluation design is insufficient for the overall project as it does not propose an examination, formatively or summatively, of other project aspects, including the development of professional learning communities, the improved capacity of building leaders', family engagement related to students' progress toward being college and career ready, the partnership arrangements, or the technology systems intended to serve as a backbone for providing personalized learning environments.

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: F(1) The application’s budget identifies all funds for the project and is reasonable to a large extent. It is unclear what portion of the budget will support the professional development aspect of the application. The budget includes a narrative that provides explanation of most budget items but the large cost of “personal devices” lacks an adequate explanation. Financial resources from partners are appropriately included in the budget. The budget section does not address strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments nor does it include information related to costs to be incurred after the grant period. There is a large amount of funding in the budget each year for personnel to provide support services, and transportation of students to take advantage of career-ready opportunities, raising questions of sustainability. This criterion was rated in the middle range.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: F(2) The application describes its approach to obtaining financial support to sustain this effort after the grant period. The application identifies several sources (e.g., the district itself, community stakeholders, particularly the identified partners). The application does not provide specific evidence of ability to access these funding sources. In addition to receiving direct financial support, the application describes vaguely how it will leverage stakeholders in the business community to carry on the work. There is a lack of specificity regarding the budget assumptions for continuation and what aspects of the project will need to receive continued funding and which can be maintained without future financial commitment. This criterion was rated in the low range.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Competitive Preference Priority The description of the integration of extra-district resources to augment the school’s resources in providing additional student and family supports to schools that address social, emotional, or behavioral needs of participation students is strong and ambitious. The partnership with HOPE Youth and Family Services Clearinghouse builds on an existing 13 year relationship. Also involved will be the local courts, elements of state government, local businesses, and a number of community organizations. The services provided to students (e.g., Saturday schools) and parents (e.g. training related to support for students, housing, job training, fitness/wellness) are very impressive; all students at the project's grade levels in the LEA will be served. The selection of performance indicators is thorough; the indicators are well-aligned with other aspects of the project and include ones focused on educational results as well as family and community supports. The indicators related to educational results are a subset of the performance indicators in Section E and will be tracked for all children and for subgroups but the application does not include a discussion of their use to target resources on subgroups described in the requirements. The description of the other measures only presents what they are (e.g., awareness of healthy lifestyle choices, increased protective factors) without discussion of tracking, using results to target resources, and improve results over time. The integration of services from the partnership with the activities the LEA will be conducting is clear in the application; these services will be in tandem with school activities and are not designed to build the capacity of school staff. This criterion was rated in the middle range.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Absolute Priority: Personalized Learning Environments

The application demonstrates that the proposed activities are built upon the core educational assurance areas. The application projects a vision regarding an approach to ensuring that secondary students graduate from high school ready, in terms of academic achievement and mastery of necessary life and workplace skills, to succeed in college and careers. The vision includes activities to improve teachers' instructional practices to equip them to provide personalized learning environments. The vision describes how new data systems will enable students, parents, and teachers to become partners in student learning through ongoing access to data related to student progress. The vision also describes how information technology will become an invaluable resource for teachers and students.

The priority was met.

Total	210	113
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional Budget Supplement

The supplement proposed to support the implementation of Franklin Covey's "The Leader in Me" in grades 1-5 in the district. The request is based on evidence of the success of that program currently in three elementary schools documented with decreases in discipline issues, including school suspension. The application provides a strong case for how this intervention will help students acquire character-building life skills that will serve them well as they move through school and beyond into college and careers. The district describes how it will provide opportunities for other districts in its regional area to learn about this program by conducting information sessions and arranging school visits; the plan as presented was not co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs. The supplement includes a high quality plan for implementation (with all required components) and a reasonable budget that provides all required information, including explanations organized by cost categories.

This criterion was rated in the high range.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0429WV-3 for Kanawha County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In the opening sentences of its application, the Kanawha County Schools (KCS) established that its RTTT-D application program has already demonstrated its commitment to the four core educational assurance areas through past district initiatives, indicated below, that it intends to build on for the present grant.

Assurance Area One: Adopting Standards and Assessment for Students to be College- and Career-Ready

KCS states that it has adopted the principles of the U. S. Department of Education’s *Investing in America’s Future – A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education* and has put those principles in practice as evidenced by several district programs, including but not limited to, a dual-enrollment initiative, a Career Plus Program that provides students with personalized learning plans to facilitate their progress toward graduation, and a Graduation Coach Program that ensures students are enrolled in the proper courses to graduate on time and enroll in college and career programs. Later in the application, the applicant indicates its commitment to full implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Years 1 – 2 of the grant, with ongoing data collection, performance assessment and reporting.

Assurance Area Two: Building Data systems that Measure Student Growth and Inform Educators for Improved Instruction

KCS has already developed an “indicator” list of criteria to identify students at-risk of dropping out and has collected preliminary data that points to the causes of student disengagement that the district will look to address through this RTTT-D grant. The district has also implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a forum for data analysis and planning interventions for students lagging in academic progress. For the RTTT-D grant, the applicant proposes to collect and analyze data on student graduation rates, college enrollment, student achievement, drop-out rates, attendance, suspensions and expulsions, and course failing rates to measure student growth. The system of student state tests results, ACT scores, Smarter Balance assessments, and student academic growth assessments to name a few measures that will be used in this project will be a part of a platform of performance measures integrated through the district’s use of *Engrade*.

Assurance Area Three: Recruitment, Development, and Retaining Effective Teachers and Principals

For this present grant, the district plans to continue its funding of teachers earning college credit and certification to teach higher level mathematics. The district’s plans also call for continuing the district’s Leadership Academy for grooming teachers for school administrative positions. New teachers will be surveyed to identify strengths and areas of improvement as compared to the skills and habits of effective teachers. New performance evaluations for teachers and principals in reading and mathematics are also listed as a primary component for the present KCS plan.

Assurance Area Four: Turning Around Low-Achieving Schools

The Kanawha County School District previously received a School Improvement Grant which it has used to implement a feature of the Title I Transformation Model; specifically removal of principals of low-performing schools. KCS replaced the principals of six of its lowest-achieving schools and is in its third and final year of working to turn around the academic programs of these buildings. KCS has identified 24 additional persistently lowest performing schools for this grant, in keeping with guidelines established by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE) which uses student achievement scores on state tests in reading and math for all students and subgroups and/or “Low Growth” (defined as student scores between the 1st – 34th percentile), and insufficient adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years.

In its attempt to present a clear and credible approach to RTTT-D goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support, the district stated that “The vision for the KCS Race to the Top is that the Kanawha Valley will become home to personalized STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design, and Math) education processes that infuse a desire to learn, produce a world-class workforce, and develops leaders at all levels. Unfortunately nowhere else in the district’s proposal is this vision of establishing a STEAM program discussed or proposed components or costs for such a program elaborated. The applicant does propose deepening student learning using online, hybrid, and blended learning, accelerating student achievement through AVID, ACT and other educational improvement programs. For example, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), is a college-readiness program for elementary through higher education that is designed to accelerate learning and increase school-wide learning and performance.

But, a high-quality plan for this RTTT-D grant not only calls for highlighting past reform initiatives and an overview of proposed new strategies, it also requires key goals, clear implementation guidelines, sequenced activities, and identified deliverables be

clearly and cohesively presented in a detailed design. Instead, the applicant presented several different tables of “needs”, “goals” and “inputs” throughout the application that made it difficult to determine the most important key goals and the order of activities and outputs as elaborated upon in A3.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

KCS has identified 24 participating schools for this grant; six of them are the persistently lowest performing schools (PLASs) in the district according to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE) using student achievement scores on state tests in reading and math for all students and subgroups and the lack of adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years. The applicant has included a table of the *Applicant’s Approach to Implementation* showing the participating schools, participating educators, and demographics of participating students (43.5% of participating students in these schools collectively are low-income). Thus, the participating schools together meet the competition’s eligibility requirements. The selected schools, participating grade spans, and their enrollment are provided in the above-referenced table. For this RTTT-D, high-need students are defined as students who have failed one or more subjects for each grade. The applicant is targeting grade bands 6 – 12 across all schools but does not explain why the middle and high grades were selected and not the elementary grades, given student data included in the plan that shows lower grade students with similarly low academic achievement.

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

10

4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The RTTT-D grant requires that applicant’s plans enumerate key goals and the activities for achieving the district’s reform, a reasonable implementation timeline, designated and appropriate deliverables and staff responsibilities for a credible reform plan overall. It was difficult to determine the most important key goals because in different tables objectives were labeled as “needs”, “goals”, and “outputs”. The KCS plan has nine (9) “outputs” that appear to be the goals of the RTTT-D project. There are educational outputs for students: to be on track to college and career readiness; having highly effective educators; and having a personalized learning plan to recover credits or improve student achievement to stay on/get on-track to graduation. There are outputs for students social-emotional well-being and reductions in truancy, suspensions and dropping out of school, and there are family/community outputs for students to demonstrate career readiness skills in internships and job placements and appropriate social competency skills.

In another table activities, deliverables, a year-by-year timeline, and responsible community partners are provided linked to two of the “goals” of two assurance areas: (1) standards and assessments to prepare students for college/careers and (2) turning around low-achieving schools. Goals for career readiness, workforce development, economic diversification and growth, and innovative adaptability are still another overlay of objectives in this plan of action; thus, there appear to be three sets of goals, albeit related. A Common Core curriculum and aligned assessments delivered by teachers who have been supported in changing present instructional methodologies with appropriate professional development are central to achieving the outputs. Thus, only a general year by year implementation timeline is provided later in the body of the application and deliverables that can be used to sustain or spread the change are not identified. Teacher, administrator, central office and parent and student responsibilities for the successful implementation of the KCS plan are also not assigned.

The district’s theory of change is that personalized learning, aligned with college and career standards will improve student outcomes is narrow in scope. There is an assumption rather than an explanation as to how outputs are connected to this theory of change.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

No evidence is presented as to whether the strategies listed by the applicant to address the four educational assurance areas will work in KCS and specifically improve student learning to the degree that students are college- and career-ready. The KCS plan alludes to “. . . aligning its services to the reform strategies already in place at all middle and high schools, but does not cite evidence that existing reforms are working.

KCS offered a table of student achievement data for all included project grades 6 – 11 with overall student scores in reading and mathematics from the WESTEST2 FOR 2010 – 2011 and 2011 – 2012 as baseline data for the purposes of this grant application. Subgroup baseline scores were also included. These data points show for example, that Grade 8 students overall scored 42.74% and 45.98% in math for those two years. Improvement targets were presented for SY 2012 – 2013 through to

SY 2015 – 2016 and post-grant. The targets are for about 3% growth each year, achievable but not ambitious benchmarks, especially for some subgroups, given present proficiency scores below the statistical mean. The reading target for grade 9 post-grant for special education students is only for 14% of these pupils to be proficient as compared to 69% of students overall. Significant achievement gaps would still remain in the 5th year of educational reform with this district’s proposed plan. Under this district’s plan in no year would more than 39% of special education students be proficient in reading in any grade in any year or more than 43% of these students in math. The district did acknowledge that its “ achievement gap is especially acute when analyzed at the District level between different student populations, and compared to state averages.” Another example of the disparities between subgroups, especially for special education students where the graduation rate for these students is projected for 65% by SY 2015 – 2016 as compared to a 90% rate for students overall, 80% for black students, and 75% for low-income students.

It also acknowledged a dropout rate of 30.8% for students with disabilities, compared to the state average of 29.25%, but significantly the college enrollment is higher for Kanawha County at 60.5% versus the state at 57.9%. This district’s plan is not ambitious in addressing these large differences and is modest in its projections for change.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

"KCS has improved student outcomes and closed achievement gaps, including raising student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college-going rates." The district goes on to present student WESTTEST2 scale score data to support this statement introducing the district’s response to this component. Scale scores for mathematics and reading from 2008 – 2012 showed a gain at every grade level. For example for grade 6, there was a math gain of 7.47 and a reading gain of 6.94 similar or larger gains were seen at the other targeted grade levels, 7 – 11. Though these are impressive statistics, a look at proficiency rates as compared to gains paints a different, less clear record of success. Math proficiency for all students in grade 6 was up from 50.51% in 2010 - 2011 to a mere 52.48% in 2011 - 2012. Projections are for proficiency rates under the proposed plan to advance only to 65% overall by 2015 – 2016. Comparable proficiency rates were also reported for reading, and proficiency rates for subgroups, whether for reading or math, were 27 – 30% lower. Major gaps are also seen in the graduation rate in 2011. For white students, the graduation rate was 68.8%, but for Hispanic students it was 46.15%; for low-income students, 59.23% and, interestingly it was 95.8% for Asian students. The district asserts that new, in-place graduation coaches, a key reform feature of the district’s plan are making a difference in the graduation rate, but there was no concrete evidence of that effect. Evidence was presented that may credit graduation coach support for a four-year decrease in the district’s dropout rate from a high of 555 to a low in 2012 of 361, but since no information is provided for when this intervention was first implemented, implications are uncertain.

The district also noted that it previously received School Improvement (SIG) grant monies to implement the ESEA, Title I Transformation Model for low-performing schools in 2010 - 2011. Because of contracts and state laws, the district could not exercise other Model options and, therefore could only replace the school principals. There was no documentation of whether student achievement in the schools of the new principals improved since their hiring for SY 2010 - 2011.. SIG monies were also used for professional development in reading and math interventions in each of the state-designated Persistently Low-Performing Schools (PLAS) of the district, but again no positive reform data was provided that showed a positive change in the teaching-learning connection.

The district sends state assessment student reports home to parents each fall. WESTSTATE2 results are available to the district’s teachers in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and curriculum teams for analysis for improved instruction. The district’s TestClarity program allows for disaggregation and re-aggregation of student performance scores by school personnel. District state reports of student achievement are by school, subgroups, grade, and content area and results posted on the state website are available to students, parents, and educators. District and school data is reported to the County BOE, district BOE, and other stakeholders. These are just a few examples of how the district makes student performance data available. The district also uses *Engrade* to interface different types of school and student data. The narrative suggests that most of these data management and reporting tools have been in place in the district and are not new for the grant application, begging the question of how well and how frequently these are presently being used to inform and improve instruction and other outcomes. What then is the rationale for funding and continued support of their use? The district’s plan does not address these issues or what would be done differently with these tools to reform school district educational practices.

One tool, the district’s state-mandated Early Warning System for identifying and helping at-risk students was just put in place in October 2012, so there is no data for determining the effectiveness of the system in highlighting poor school attendance,

poor discipline and course failing behaviors. Plans for evaluations of this System were not included in the district's proposal; a weakness given the costs financially and in manpower to launch it.

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

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3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district issues a Human Resources report to the district BOE, governmental agencies where required, and posts it on the district's website. It shows salary schedules for new hires only and for other instructional and support personnel. Total personnel expenditures were included in this plan, but not by school-level and it though it was unclear what school year these figures were for. If the expenditures included in this plan are an example of how they are reported to the public, only limit information is being provided, not in keeping with the spirit of this RTT-D requirement. The district also does not indicate whether hard copies of expenditure/salary reports are available to stakeholders without a computer. School administration costs were not addressed. It is assumed that all of this information can be accessed through the state sources cited, but these are not representative of LEA transparency in and of itself.

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

10

4

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district offered state Senate and House bill citations to document autonomy given to school districts in West Virginia to implement federal grant programs, particularly a program for establishing personalized learning environments. A description of the bills was provided for clarity of application/to determine if there was sufficiency of autonomy for each of the four educational assurance areas. In some cases the descriptions of the bills suggested a complementary rather than a direct relationship between an individual assurance area and local district autonomy to implement programs, strategies, monitoring and evaluation structures for achievement of the educational assurance. For example, S. B. 611 provides for state community-based demonstration projects to improve at-risk youth outcomes. In other cases, the descriptions suggested a more tangential relationship. For example, S. B.436 established Community College/Career Education Consortia planning districts to implement student tracking data systems. The shared cases blur understanding of the level of autonomy allowed, but the examples perhaps imply that the district has sufficient autonomy to implement the reform plan.

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

10

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district states that Local School Improvement Councils were directly engaged in assessing needs and providing input for development of the KCS proposal and teachers were surveyed regarding their support of the RTTT-D plan. Teachers also interviewed parents about school-level parent activities and their satisfaction with them. Teachers and community organizations (COs) and higher education (IHE) stakeholders were asked about their expectations for the application and what they thought was needed for it to be a successful application/reform program. Letters of support were received from the COs and IHEs. But, direct engagement in proposal development differs in methodology and degree from completion of surveys and being interviewed about programs not directly related to the proposal. There is no evidence teachers were given copies of the complete proposal nor were they participants in writing it, rather it seems they were given an written overview and asked to express their support or non-support of the grant application. As a non-collective bargaining LEA, the district reported that 70% of teachers supported the proposal. A table with the names of the schools and a tabulation of Yes and No votes was provided.

The district also canvassed community organizations, businesses, churches and local government for prospective partnerships to achieve positive results for the students. Over 21 partnerships are identified; while the role of each is provided in a chart format without details of projected services and responsibilities or criteria for quality implementation. Are all of the partnerships of equal priority? Do some provide financial support to back up their provision of services or must all partnership activities be paid for through the RTTT-D grant? What is the commitment long-term of any of the stakeholders over the four years of the grant and in the post-grant period.

Evidence that the applicant submitted the proposal to the state department of education for review was evidence in the appendix. The state gave no substantive comments requiring a response from the applicant.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

As with Section A3, this sub-criterion relates to whether the LEA provided evidence of goals, timelines, activities, and

deliverables for analyzing the status of personalized learning in the participating schools and in the district. The district's plan of action by core educational assurance area was displayed in a table that identified the needs and gaps, activities, timeline, persons responsible for the implementation, and expected outcomes. For example for the educational assurance area focused on standards and assessment, the need to increase students' exposure and experience with college and career opportunities would be addressed by implementing career exploration activities such as Jr. Achievement's *Roads to Success* during Years 1 -2 of the grant period; the Jr. Achievement Alliance would have responsibility for this personalized learning experience.

A vast number of programs/activities are outlined in the plan of action; for the above-referenced need, as many as 15. High quality implementation of this many activities for just one of the assurance areas will require intensive coordination and more detailed timelines than presented. Most of the activities appear to be being fully-implemented in Year 1; consideration to some being phased in during Years 2, 3 or 4 may be appropriate. Specific deliverables from each partnership and activity are not linked to the services described in the plan. Thus, the plan was only of moderate quality.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Learning plans for preparing students for college and careers outlined for the KCS project include informational programs for “. . .students and their families to learn about postsecondary planning.” Courses still to be developed will “. . . help students set educational goals, learn about careers, and make plans for their future.” Beginning in the middle grades, a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for college and careers and has aligned assessments is also part of the KCS design. A Project-based learning (PBL) model will be used for improved student outcomes. KCS cites research that this model results in greater retention of knowledge and helps low-achieving students learn problem-solving skills. A table of activities, deliverables, a year-by-year timeline, and responsible community partners is provided linked to two assurance areas: (1) standards and assessments to prepare students for college/careers and (2) turning around low-achieving schools. Goals for career readiness, workforce development, economic diversification and growth, and innovative adaptability overlay this plan of action.

The plan is unique in that the suggested courses do not appear to be a district-designed curriculum but are community organization programs that the district is depending on their partners to provide. However, no matrix for student access is explained. It is suggested that assessment of the courses or programs will measure academic strengths, but the specific assessments are not identified, other than state tests used to measure core student learning overall. In some cases, only annual assessments are planned, which may not give frequent and timely information for possible program modifications/adjustments to better meet student needs. In other instances, quarterly assessments are prescribed, yet the rationale for differentiation in frequency is not explained. The implementation timeline is very general, only indicating the year activities will begin and whether they will continue in subsequent years. No reference is made as to how community partner programs will be personalized to meet individual student needs or interests, sequenced, or changed to include accommodations for high-need students. The rigor of the courses for deep learning could not be determined since no example of the listed programs was included with the plan, and while a variety of programs are listed, tools that students will be able to use to structure and track their learning are not identified. There is also no evidence that these courses/programs will expose students to diverse cultures. And, although parental involvement is alluded to, no specifics for parent training and engagement are described. The role of teachers, school-level personnel, and central office staff is also not addressed.

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

The KFC plan offers research to support its use of the DuFour-Eaker Professional Learning Community model for long-term “systemic change” beyond the grant period. Educators will be trained in the model's tenets of commitment to continuous improvement and collective inquiry. The plan states that through PLC work, KCS staff will receive professional development to “. . . examine the practices and procedures of their schools . . .” so that the focus is on student learning, not teaching. Topics for the training include PBL, critical thinking and problem solving and technology literacy, but how the professional development will be delivered is not definitive.

A high quality plan for improving teaching and learning would need to include additional activities and accountability. The KCS plan is presented in a tables that link the two other assurance areas not addressed in C1 above to teaching and learning; specifically: (1) building data systems that measure student growth and (2) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals. Primary objectives of the KFC plan for teaching to prepare students for college and careers are to train district staff to use technology and digital tools for applications to improve student learning. Teachers will be

expected to “Evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice . . . to make effective use of digital tools and resources . . .”; a very general description of the plans professional development for these important skills. There is no indication of content or how teachers will be trained to personalize and/or accelerate learning. Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development will be used to measure overall effectiveness of this aspect of the project versus the impact of specific trainings. No plans for the recruitment of principals and teachers was presented for this second assurance area.

Project Program Managers will have responsibility for collaborating with district and community stakeholders to build data systems of student achievement on state tests and district assessments and tools such as TEST MATE Clarity. Deliverables include a new teacher evaluation system and Gallup survey results of teacher perceptions. Though several and disparate assessment tools are listed in the table (Smarter Balance assessments, ACT assessments, *WorkKeys*, and perception polls), there is no evidence of consideration of integrating the assessments and information gleaned from them in one user-friendly platform.

Again, as for C1, the implementation timeline is very general, only indicating the year activities will begin and whether they will continue in subsequent years. Quarterly and annual assessments are again indicated without a rationale for the differences in frequency and the content and focus of the measurements is not apparent. For example, are assessments listed as a “deliverable” with the leadership objective, assessments of School Leadership Team operations or assessment of recruiting or development of teachers?

There is no specific plan of action --- with a range of activities, a timeline, and persons responsible, etc--- for increasing the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals. While it is true that a new teacher evaluation system will be put in place, training of supervisors to provide effective feedback to teachers for improved learning, is not outlined. There is an unsubstantiated assumption in the plan that having training for PLCs will automatically result in greater numbers of effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KCS plan includes an Organizational Chart of school district administration and departments for this school year without explanation as to whether this is a new organizational chart to meet the requirements of the RTTT-D grant for establishment of an infrastructure that supports schools and personalized learning or whether this is the existing, unchanged structure.</p> <p>The plan states that School Leadership Teams (SLTs) exist in all schools, participating and non-participating schools, with the autonomy to plan instruction and extracurricular activities and development of school budgets although the central office has control of staffing and recruitment. Thus, there is the potential for the flexibility and autonomy of SLTs is circumscribed with regard to addressing personalized learning in ways that relate to instructional expertise or skill.</p> <p>Though academic seat time is prescribed by the WVDOE, the KCS plan proposes use of PBL, e2020 and digital technology as well as links to the West Virginia Virtual School to expand options for students to master course content and contact hour requirements and take courses not offered at their schools. The KCS plan notes that “e2020 is a leading provider of core and elective instruction in virtual and blended learning environments grades 6 – 12,” thereby increasing individualized and collective choices for student learning. Other web-based alternatives for personalized and differentiated instruction to meet student needs include Achieve3000 and Think Through Math. All of these are adaptable learning resources useful for accommodating students needs. Thus, while the plan lists and describes learning resources/activities, the same problem exists as elsewhere in the plan, of there being no implementation timelines, cited deliverables, or staff accountable for effective implementation.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KCS plan draws on state and proposed local learning resources for students, parents, educators and other stakeholders. For example, KCS students and parents have access (not provided by KCS) to the state online learning platforms Learn 21 and Parent 21 for home use. These platforms offer “activities and games that are aligned with grade-level curriculum and the Common Core.” KCS plans to “establish a District RTTT-D blog and various social media sites for . . . communication with students, parents, and other stakeholders.” Neither electronic tutors nor tools that make recommendations were discussed as</p>		

being options considered for the KCS design.

Parent technology trainings will be offered and the district's technology integration specialists will provide all stakeholders with support. The district's existing Edline and Engrade are sources of student data, grade books, and multimedia online classrooms. Edline has a built-in translation capability to translate 20+ languages so that communication with all families is possible. *Engrade* has "the ability to measure and report on student college and career readiness, and administrator analysis of student progress and mastery across standards." Parents can view and print their child's data.

While the potential for student, parent, and teacher access to these tools is clearly present, a construct for delivery of training to use the tools and resources, and persons responsible for delivery, monitoring, and evaluation were not elaborated upon in the plan. Accommodations for families without home computers was not discussed. No mention was made of stakeholder access to budget or human resources data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The KCS plan provides a very cursory response to this section of the proposal, merely stating that "Activity evaluations provide feedback on contents of tutorial sessions, courses, supplemental instruction . . ." Periodic reviews and modifications to services are made where necessary to improve proficiency levels." The important considerations of the format of the evaluation of the program design , the context in which the evaluations will be conducted, the timeline for conducting the evaluations, and how corrections will be made are not included in the plan. The plan does indicate that " . . . modifications will be a standing item on the monthly RTTT-D Advisory Council meeting agenda," but leaves responsibility for review of project status almost solely in the lap of the Project Director during the grant; who has responsibility after the grant is not addressed. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the evaluation and feedback mechanisms will be timely or measure the quality of investments.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The KCS plan is for the Project Director to be responsible for ongoing communications and engagement with stakeholders. To facilitate such communication and engagement, the Director will be responsible for establishing an RTTT-D Advisory Council of school personnel, parents and students, and project partners that will meet monthly to "review program compliance and design and implement strategies to inform the District community." A computer-based project data platform will be established that will include key informational data of the program (e.g. student data, transcripts, credits) so that program results can be reported in various ways (e.g. scores, percentiles, comparative methods of student progress). Each student will have an Educational Plan with comparable individual data. Traditional modes of communication such as newsletters, press releases, emails, websites, and program brochures will be used. No evidence is presented that these strategies will prove to be especially engaging or effective in communicating with stakeholders nor was there any indication of the frequency of these communications. The proposal also does not address the accessibility of online communications for families, students, and community members without home computers		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: Perhaps the district's most complete response to RTTT application components can be found in this section of the KCS application. Twelve to fourteen assessment tools will be used by KCS. The performance measures of the KCS plan are extensive and address student academic achievement, graduation rates, post-secondary enrollment, student employment and effectiveness of program initiatives. Student achievement instruments will include standardized test proficiency scores, growth measures, and grade-level career objectives. Surveys, interview protocols, and questionnaires are included in the package of evaluation tools that KCS will use for this project. KCS also plans to evaluate and identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals using student achievement results on the state assessment WESTTEST2. Highly effective teachers and administrators, by the district's definition not the state's, will be those with the greatest number and percent of participating students scoring <i>Distinguished</i> on the state math and reading tests. Effective teachers and administrators, by the		

district's definition, will be those with the greatest number and percent of participating students scoring *Above Mastery* on the same instruments. Using this year's results, adjustments will be made as necessary in these criteria when the district implements its proposed new evaluation system for principals and teachers in the SY 2013 – 2014. Having an evaluation system for principals and teachers by 2012 – 2015 is one of the eligibility requirements for participating in this RTTT-D grant program; the KCS plan proposes to have this component in place ahead of requirements. The constructs of the KCS educator evaluation system are not described in this plan.

There are also plans to use student attendance for grade 6 – 8 students as the measure of whether students are on-track to college- and career-readiness. This measure is a not a very discriminating tool for this purpose even though the district attests that it is “ . . . the greatest predictor of college and career readiness at the 6 – 8 grade level. No research is given to support this contention. Students with five or more absences during the school year are assumed to not be on-track to meet college and careers goals. Academic achievement for this grade span will continue to be the WESTTEST2, but a transition will be made in 2014 – 2015 to using the SMARTER Balanced Assessment for measuring attainment of the Common Core State Standards. A cross-walk will be needed between the two instruments for KCS to analyze student achievement data longitudinally. Data for students as a whole and by subgroups will be collected and analyzed. Student discipline suspension reports, again a not well-correlated tool for the purpose, will be used as an indicator of social-emotional performance.

For grades 9 – 12, data on the number of participating students taking the ACT test and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be used to measure for college enrollment. Not all students completing the application will actually go to an institution of higher education however. The *WorkKeys* assessment will be used to measure the number of participating students who are on-track to being career-ready. No description of *WorkKeys* was provided so that age-appropriateness and content could be determined. Academic achievement will be measured by the WESTTEST1 and later the SMARTER Balanced Assessment as for grade 6 – 8 students, as will discipline reports as a social-emotional indicator.

Tables with baseline scores and performance targets for students by subject area and grade and by subgroup, during the grant period and beyond, were provided in the plan. Unfortunately, a review of the targets revealed that they were not ambitious even though they were probably achievable. For example, the percent of participating students having highly effective teachers/principals was reported as being 8% for the SY 2011 – 2012, but would rise to only 15% for SY 2015 – 2016 in for all students in math and from 11% to 16% in reading. Student achievement targets were reflected similarly low expectations. While all Grade 6 participating students were 52.48% proficient in reading in SY 2011 – 2012, 65% of students are projected to score proficient in four years; a gain of about 13 percentage points. Forty-two percent of Black students are projected to be proficient and only 32% of low-income students by SY 2015 – 2016; and achievement gaps of nearly 20 – 30%.

In summary, the performance measures for student achievement in the KCS RTTT-D proposal are achievable if not ambitious. While all of the measures for the two grade spans may be age-appropriate, they are not all the most appropriate tools that might have been selected for greater evaluative rigor (e. g. attendance rates for grade 6 – 8 college- and career-readiness). Timely use of the results of state student achievement assessments for project modifications (especially the instructional component) may not be possible since these tests are given annually. No formative achievement assessments were identified; since discipline reports are usually generated monthly in most districts. Assuming that this is the case for KCS, these tools may provide more time-sensitive information to inform change. Twelve to fourteen assessment tools will be used by KCS. The applicant did not respond directly to the question of review and adjustments over time of performance measures that may prove insufficient to gauge; replacement of the WESTTEST2 with the SMARTER Balance Assessments is being mandated at national and state levels; the district's action is in keeping with state requirements for implementing the Common Core.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 KCS states that it will evaluate (1) how well the program meets funded objectives; (2) how well the program meets larger RTTT-D program objectives; and (3) the impact of the program on participating students, especially under-represented groups. KCSs plans are displayed in an Evaluation Plan table that lists evaluated components, for example, student performance on summative achievement assessments, and the types/forms of data that will be collected to determine the effectiveness of program initiatives and financial and other investments in same. Both formative and summative assessments for project effectiveness included required quarterly reports and the USDOE Annual Performance Report (APR) on the project (formative because it is a report that informs the next year's progress). Summative tools are the APR and participant evaluation of services. The use of these tools does not describe a very robust evaluation system for determining effectiveness of investments; indeed, key investments were not identified whereby there would be special interest to know the relationship between dollars spent and outcomes or investments of time and outcomes

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables, should identify RTTT-D funds as well as district monies, grants, state and other Federal funds that will be used so that determinations can be made as to the reasonableness and sufficiency of requested monies and the rationale for same. KCS used the required Table 4-1 to meet requirements to document activities funded with RTTT-D monies for Year 1 of the project and total project costs, without specifying detailed expenditure differences for Years 2 – 4. For some budgeted items KCS included limited itemization to demonstrate how costs were calculated. However, there was no itemization of the use of district monies, grants and other external funds for project activities, the resulting implication being that no such monies, other than indirect costs, are being used for the KCS project.</p> <p>It was difficult to identify one-time investments since there was limited indication of these investments versus those that will be ongoing operational costs during and after the grant period. Most project costs were for all four years for every major category (e. g. Personnel, Travel, Contractual). The few exceptions noted were for advertising the design of the program for one year only, and monies for one year for two Hope Community Development Corp. curriculum programs. There was no explanation of why the two cited curriculum programs are for only one year.</p> <p>In fact, the only rationale for investments provided in Budget Table 4-1: <i>Project-Level Itemized Costs</i> was for Personnel positions, although the need for some of the positions was not clear from the balance of the proposal. For example, is the Coordinator of Education to establish relationships with district teachers for professional development support or to monitor implementation of best instructional practices. Or, is this Coordinator the liaison between the district and community entities like Hope Community Development Corp, to support that entity's teachers or educators for their curriculum programs? Or is this position for coordination with institutions of higher education for college-readiness activities? The need for this position nor that of Coordinator of Business or the Coordinator of Community Relations or the Program Directors for the Hope and Charleston Community programs were never discussed elsewhere in the body of the KCS proposal so it is difficult to justify the investment, though it may be appropriate. In reading the total proposal, until the budget was reviewed, it seemed that these community partners would be providing, and therefore funding their own staff members who would work with the KCS project; an assumption perhaps but an understandable one given that there were no previous statements indicating KFC would pay personnel costs related to the project of community partners.</p> <p>Another problem in reviewing the budget was that costs were not always lined up with budget items making it difficult to determine whether calculations were correct for the items. This was especially tricky with Personnel positions. There was also no designation for Personnel positions as to whether they were full-time or part-time.</p> <p>In addition, the reasonableness of other costs was not evident. For example, \$25,000 per year is budgeted for Junior Achievement “ to provide guidance and direction to teachers on the program.” Some questions that come to mind regarding these costs are: Are these salaries for counselors? How many students and teachers will be served for this amount of money? What is the nature of the guidance services and how frequently will the services be provided? On the other had, more details were provided regarding the costs of summer internships for students with Charleston Community and Family Development. Thus, supporting documentation to measure the reasonableness of the budget was unevenly presented.</p> <p>In closing, while the KCS budget lists expenditures for many project items, it was difficult to determine how costs were calculated for some items and the rationale for the investments was not always present, making it difficult to determine the sufficiency of budgeted items. One-time versus ongoing investments were not always clear and the source of any monies other than RTTT-D funds that will be used to implement the project was not identified.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has a rather impressive multi-step plan of activities for sustaining the project with the Advisory Council having responsibility for implementing this part of the plan. Activities include (from the very beginning of the project(, inventorying current fundin, documenting the success of the project for prospective funders, selecting priorities for future funding, and securing the funds and institutionalizing the program. Community partners will be asked to continue their programs beyond the grant period, making programmatic and financial adjustments as necessary. However, given the fact that the KFC budget appears to be fully funding community partner activities of the project, the likelihood of partner component activities continuing without alternative monies seems slim. The KFC plan does however look to “transfer of fiscal responsibility” for some components of the project to the standing district budget. There is no budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This district is opting for the Competitive Preference Priority that calls for districts to integrate public and private resources in partnerships designed to augment school system resources for providing additional social, emotional, and behavioral supports to RTTT-D grant participating Grade 6 – 12 students and their families, who will also be served through the primary grant.

KCS will address this priority through collaboration with two key community partnerships (HOPE Community Development, Charleston Community and Family Development); both are also partners in implementing primary components of the larger grant. The goals of the project are aimed specifically at improving social, emotional, and cognitive readiness for school; improving developmental milestones, and improving alignment and transitions between education programs and grade levels.

HOPE Community Development has “. . . secured seed funding to establish the HOPE Youth and Family Services Clearinghouse” which will provide services to students and their families to reduce the truancy of youth referred by the school district and juvenile probation programs. Delivery of job training, housing, fitness and wellness services and a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Center will be coordinated through HOPE Clearinghouse.

In its expansion of supports to participating high-need students and their parents, KCS will also partner with Charleston Community Family Development Corporation (CCFDC) to establish a “Full-service Community Schools” model at participating district schools. Health, safety, community engagement and stability programs will be offered. CCFDC and KCS have experience, since 2008, implementing this model program at one of the district’s elementary schools. CCFDC will also join with KCS to hold its Pre-College Vo-Tech Program career and vocational component after-school and during Spring Break. College tours, career planning, and parent workshops are pivotal o this component. A table of activities, the partners, and evaluation tools is included in this section of the KCS RTTT-D proposal. Another table, *Population-Level Desired Results*, displays the desired results by grade spans. For example, one outcome is to have all Grade 6 – 9 students become aware of healthy lifestyle choices and increased protective factors. One performance measure is discipline reports to show any decrease in the number of days students are suspended.

This coherent description of partnerships with HOPE and Charleston to bolster student learning by surrounding them and their families with an array of socio-emotional support services is aligned with broader project goals and uses some of the same indicators to track implementation success and is a scale up of the original project since this Competitive Preference project will include students who were not participants in the larger project. Evidence is provided of integration of education and social services as with the Clearinghouse social service and Pre-College Vo-Tech Program, but capacity-building of school and district teachers and/or support personnel to provide these extension services appears to be meager, if not non-existent since no evidence of training of staff is included in this component of the grant application. And, the use of data to target the resources of this component also was not discussed here. Finally, although performance measures, including student achievement scores and discipline reports will be used, evidence of parent engagement in program decision-making and evaluations was also absent.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

A summary of how all four core educational assurance areas were addressed in this proposal follows:

Assurance Area One: Adopting Standards and Assessment for Students to be College- and Career-Ready

KCS states that it has adopted the principles of the U. S. Department of Education’s *Investing in America’s Future – A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education* and has put those principles in practice as evidenced by several district programs. The applicant indicates its commitment to full implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Years 1 – 2 of the grant, with ongoing data collection, performance assessment and reporting.

Assurance Area Two: Building Data systems that Measure Student Growth and Inform Educators for Improved Instruction

KCS has already developed an “indicator” list of criteria to identify students at-risk of dropping out and has collected preliminary data that points to the causes of student disengagement that the district will look to address through this RTTT-D grant. The district has also implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). For the RTTT-D grant, the applicant proposes to collect and analyze data on student graduation rates, college enrollment, student achievement, drop-out rates, attendance, suspensions and expulsions, and course failing rates to measure student growth.

Assurance Area Three: Recruitment, Development, and Retaining Effective Teachers and Principals

For this present grant, the district plans to continue its funding of teachers earning college credit and certification to teach higher level mathematics. The district’s plans also call for continuing the district’s Leadership Academy for grooming teachers for school administrative positions. New teachers will be surveyed to identify strengths and areas of improvement as compared to the skills and habits of effective teachers. New performance evaluations for teachers and principals in reading and mathematics are also listed as a primary component for the present KCS plan.

Assurance Area Four: Turning Around Low-Achieving Schools

The Kanawha County School District has received a previous School Improvement Grant which it has used to implement a feature of the Title I Transformation Model; specifically removal of principals of low-performing schools. KCS replaced the principals of six of its lowest-achieving schools and is in its third and final year of working to turn around the academic programs of these buildings. KCS has identified 24 additional persistently lowest performing schools for this grant, in keeping with guidelines established by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE) which uses student achievement scores on state tests in reading and math for all students and subgroups and/or “Low Growth” (defined as student scores between the 1st – 34th percentile), and insufficient adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years.

Total	210	92
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is submitting one Optional Budget Supplement for \$1,967,885.00 which is within the threshold for such a request. The request is to fund a character education program that is supplemental and complementary to the primary project, but not necessary for implementation of the original RTTT-D proposal. The supplement is for expansion of Franklin Covey’s *The Leader in Me* program to nearly 5,000 students in grades 1 – 5 in all the elementary schools in the district. The applicant has experience with successful implementation of the program at four other elementary schools in the district, resulting in improvements in student social-emotional behaviors as measured by significant declines in the percent of students suspended or expelled, from 70% before staff was trained in the model to 30% after the program was started. Two graphs showing the declines in two of the schools are presented as evidence of the impact of *The Leader in Me* program.

The Leader in Me program is seen by the applicant as a worthy tool for “developing the soft skills and self-awareness of [personal] strengths that will support the focus of middle and high schools in the RTTT District application” of increasing academic achievement and college- and career-readiness of participating students in grades 6 – 12. Thus, the rationale for the extension project is that “The Leader in Me is a school-wide transformation program to assist educators in helping their students take personal interest in, and responsibility for, their own learning ” by promoting social-emotional learning and goal-setting, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Therefore a strength of this supplement is that it addresses the same skills and critical attributes of learning as required in section C1 of the primary original RTTT-D application.

As required, the activities of this supplement will be implemented across two or more LEAs, in this instance, with three other county school districts located in the Regional Education Agency of which Kanawha County Schools is also a part. KCS will host informational sessions for staff of these three schools and will have them visit KCS schools to see the program in operation. In addition to these activities with the partner schools, the plan includes professional development, including two coaching days in Years 3 and 4, for KCS staff new to the program. The contents of the professional development are described with some detail. There are also plans for having some KCS staff become certified in the Covey methods to sustain the program in the district beyond the supplement grant period. The applicant states that program evaluation tools include teacher, student, and parent satisfaction surveys that measure such metrics as reductions in student discipline referrals and

increases in attendance. The FranklinCovey organization conducts a review of school results each year of the program to determine whether programmatic benchmarks are being met. The nature of these benchmarks was not detailed in the application. A general timeline for implementation of each phase of the program over the three years of the grant, with the schools and numbers of participating students, was provided.

The budget lists personnel, contractual, travel and supply costs for each year of the grant, but the descriptions for budget items did not always provide needed details. For example, professional and service staff members, supported by program funds, and their roles in the program were not identified. If costs were for training stipends, this was not clearly explicated. Similarly, the basis for numbers supplied for program supplies could not be correlated with the number of student participants. The supplies listed appear to be reasonable for the program in that they include *The Leader in Me* staff and student materials.