



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1048MN-1 for Lynd Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Applicant set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that built its work on 3 core educational assurances (Adopting stds & assessments that prepare students for college/career readiness, building data systems, & recruiting/retention) and articulated a clear plan and credible approach working with a consortium of 6 districts to deepen student learning in STEM, and quality teacher/student pd & collaborations. Overall, the consortium articulated a vision to increase equity and collaboration</i> <i>Applicant only identified and addressed 3 of the 4 core educational assurance areas</i> <i>Under Recruiting/Retention section of the core ed assurances, some of the applicant's key evaluation activities were insufficient as a measure for evaluation (i.e. peer evaluations, involvement in pd, attendance at parent-student-teacher activities, growth of relationship between student/teacher)</i> 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Applicant's approach to describing the process of selecting participants was very general, in that, the basis of the consortium membership was low-income and high needs students.</i> <i>Applicant briefly listed the districts and schools and vaguely identified participating students and educators. Although, the applicant did provide a chart addressing (A)(2)(c) of this section, applicant explanations were insufficient.</i> <i>Applicant was too brief and vague in explanation to this entire section. (i.e. terminology like approximately 40% of students are deemed low-income and a similar number of students are high-needs, or providing more detail in the process for selection)</i> 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Applicant created a basic Logic Model to describe reform and change that demonstrated inputs, outputs, and outcomes and the logic of how it planned to improve student learning</i> <i>Applicant only submitted the Logic Model without in-depth detail clarifying how listed output activities were aligned/impacted/interconnected with short, medium, long outcomes. Too brief of response.</i> <p><i>Overall, the plan was not high-quality because the applicant left out explanations/clarifications of how the reform proposal would scale-up and translate into meaningful reform.</i></p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant's vision may result in improved student learning, however the applicant did not provide sufficient information to make that assessment
2. Under Performance on summative assessments: Applicant was too brief and vague by only stating that summative assessment would impact the applicant's vision (the 3 core ed assurances)

-the performance on summative assessments chart lacked sufficient information, organization, and overall ambitious goals. (i.e. Inconsistencies in subgroup categories-White and Hispanic, Only White or only Hispanic data represented and subgroup categories were in different order throughout the chart; Hendricks SD had 2 sets of data for same goal area; data from all districts were not present; For the schools that were listed, their goals were not ambitious-focusing on a 4 to 7 percent increase.

3. Under Decreasing achievement gaps: Applicant was too brief and vague by only stating that applicant's vision (the 3 core ed assurances) would decrease achievement gap and providing a chart with school data.

- the decreasing achievement gaps chart lacked adequate information for comparisons. (i.e. applicant did not include "overall" in subgroup to get a better analysis of the data, and lack of information and explanation in this section does not allow explanations for areas like high percentages in the SPED subgroup.) Lastly, the consortium math and reading goals are not ambitious.

4. Under Graduation rates: Applicant was too brief and vague in responding to this section.

-goals for graduation performance was not ambitious enough (with a 1 percentage point increase per year) considering the Consortium has a high graduation rate

5. Under College Enrollment: Applicant's response was too vague and brief.

- goals for graduation enrollment was not ambitious enough (with a 1 percentage point increase per year) considering the Consortium has a decent college enrollment rate

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Applicant demonstrated evidence of advancing student learning and achievement, and improved student learning outcomes as a consortium in reading, math, and Grad writing which was represented in chart form only.</i> 2. <i>Although the applicant raised student learning and achievement, the increase of percentage points were minimal across all 3 records of success. (i.e. Reading 2009-81%, 2010-80%, 2011-82%, 2012-82%, Math 2009-2012-range of points 69%-75%, and GRAD writing 2009-91%, 2010-90%, 2011-89%, 2012-91%).</i> 3. <i>Applicant did not include explanations/descriptions of the data used. This would have been very helpful because clarity would have been given to why the Goal Index Rate (GIR) in math for 2011-67% lower than the previous year (2010-GIR 78%). Also, explanations would have described the population for the GRAD Writing data which, if was for graduations requirements, would allow reviewer to add points for graduations rates, otherwise was not applicable because applicant did not submit a response. Moreover, there were no data associated with persistently low or lowest performing schools.</i> 4. <i>Applicant fail to demonstrate evidence of making student performance data available to stakeholders</i> <p><i>Overall, the applicants' lack of sufficient information and clarity resulted in minimal points.</i></p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant demonstrated an intent/pledge to increase transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. Although the applicant

sought to pledge transparency, the applicant's comment: "We all comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.10 which requires that every school board shall publish annual budgets with corresponding detail" and lack

1. of evidence suggested that the applicant's transparency is non-existent.

Applicant did not demonstrate evidence of a high level of transparency and was not able, at minimum, include a description of the extent to which the applicant already makes available the 4 categories listed in this section-they were not even addressed

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant demonstrated evidence of successful conditions under state legal and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environment by means of alignment with the Minnesota DOE.
2. Applicant did not demonstrated adequate evidence of sufficient autonomy; only stated that they had autonomy.

Overall, applicant demonstrated evidence for halve of the required points

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal by providing evidence of several years of collaborative efforts supporting pd and teacher quality which lead all stakeholders revising efforts to more targeted work with students (i.e. promoting personal learning environments, better use of data, and STEM).
2. Applicant did not identify how each stakeholder engaged in the development of the proposal; applicant used general terms to describe engagement which weakened this sections
3. Applicant has collective bargaining representation and provided evidence of direct engagement and support from all 6 teacher unions listed in the Appendix which strengthen this section
4. Applicant demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement through letters of support from key stakeholders.

Applicant provided clear explanations for consortium's collaborative efforts, the impact of the proposal's revisions, and quality stakeholder support

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant demonstrated evidence of a plan for an analysis of their current status in implementing personalized learning environment and provided logical evidence behind the reform by identifying needs in STEM, data systems, administrative evaluation systems, adoption of new student standards, and personalized learning, and discussing how addressing those needs will fill in the gaps they want to address.

Overall, the applicant provided a high-quality plan explaining their current status in implementing personalized learning environments and their logic behind how they want to fill in their gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant provided a plan for improving learning and teaching through the implementation, evaluation, and refinement of current assessments. Applicant articulated plans of approach to implement the process. However, the plan did not address improving learning and teaching by personalizing learning environments in order to support college/career readiness. Although the applicants' reasoning for revising of assessments was of quality, they did not address college/career readiness.

2. (C)(1)(a)(i)-Applicant briefly stated that a greater focus would be placed on both careers and career paths so that students better link their learning to future goals. That comment did not establish an approach to learning or an understanding of what student would be learning. Also, explanation in this section was not aligned with explanation for revamping assessments in (C)(1), question 1.
3. ((C)(1)(a)(ii)-Applicant's plan to identify learning and development goals linked to graduation and college were based on students taking benchmark assessments. Overall explanation for this section was far too vague.
4. (C)(1)(a)(iii)-Applicant's plan to be able to be involved in deep learning experiences was not ambitious (i.e. new on-line coursework, real-life experiences with business and higher ed partners.) Also, explanation for this section was not aligned with revising assessments in (C)(1), question 1.
5. (C)(1)(a)(iv)-Applicant's plan for students having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivates and deepen student learning was not elaborated. Applicant only (briefly) stated that all academic offerings were provided in a culturally appropriate context; not enough information. Also, explanation for this section was not aligned with revising assessments in (C)(1), question 1.
6. (C)(1)(a)(v)-Applicant's plan for students to master critical academic content and develop skills/traits was mentioned to say that their schools have a strong track record in supporting and developing student skills but not demonstrating or providing evidence of how. Also, explanation for this section was not aligned with revising assessments in (C)(1), question 1.
7. (C)(1)(b)(i)- Applicant did not provide an adequate plan of approaching learning with the support of stakeholders to ensure a personalized sequence of instructional content designed to enable student to achieve learning goals and ensuring college/career readiness. Instead, the applicant briefly explained how new data systems would allow for better personalization of instruction and tracking towards education and career goals.
8. (C)(1)(b)(ii)- Applicant's approach to learning that ensures each student has access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments was vague and not ambitious enough to be considered high-quality instructional approaches (i.e. on-line learning, classroom learning, and other approaches and environments as needed).
9. (C)(1)(b)(iii)- Applicant did not have a clear plan to ensure that students had access to high-quality content, including digital learning as it relates to college/career readiness. Applicant stated that funding from this grant would support these efforts.
10. (C)(1)(b)(iv)(A)- Applicant's plan to ensure that each student has access to ongoing and regular feedback was vague and not ambitious. Applicant just stated that the data system will track progress towards graduation.
11. (C)(1)(b)(iv)(B) – Applicant's plan to ensure student access to ongoing and feedback for personalized learning recommendations based on student current knowledge/skills and college/career readiness was too vague. (i.e. utilizing data systems coupled with student benchmarks [all funded by the grant] will allow teachers to make recommendations on achievement of career goals.

(C)(1)(b)(v)- Applicant did not provide adequate accommodations or high quality strategies for high need students to help ensure college/career readiness. Instead, applicant just stated that personalized learning plans will accommodate all students and allow specific focus on high needs students but no explanation of how?

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	3
---	----	---

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

1. *plan to engage in training and professional learning communities does not adequately support the implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that ensures all students can graduate on time/college-career readiness. The applicants brief explanation focused how providing pd would relate to new assessment and standard to be prepare for college and careers; no clear explanation describing how.*
2. *(C)(2)(a)(ii) – Applicant's plan to adapt content and instruction, and opportunities for students to engage in common tasks were not address adequately. Applicant briefly stated that pd would be in relation to personalization of instructional; too vague and needs clarity*
3. *(C)(2)(a)(iii) – Applicant's did not have a plan for frequently measuring student process towards college/career readiness or use of data to inform accelerations in student progress.*
4. *(C)(2)(a)(iv) – Applicant's plan to improve teachers and principal's practice and effectiveness was nonexistent. Applicant just mentioned teacher/principal evaluation systems*

Throughout the remaining parts in this section, the applicant did not adequately address each section, as also demonstrated in part A as well. Overall, the applicant's responses/plans were not aligned with questioning, too vague, or too ambiguous.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	2
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant provided a vague, low-quality plan to support project implementation by stating that the Superintendent of the lead applicant was going to manage the consortium and districts pledged support. 2. Applicant did not provide a plan for providing school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over any of the listed factors. However, the applicant response was brief and mentioned that the project was envisioned to be both district and school specific. Applicants' comment was not identified or explained in previous sections of the grant and adds a new spin to grant requirements. 3. Applicant did not provide a quality plan for giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and not time spent. Applicant referred to the use of formative assessments to check progress and providing online experiences that was not time based. No option/mention of earning credit. 4. Applicant plan for giving students the opportunity to demonstrate master of standards multiple times and in multiple was inadequate because the applicant suggested rubrics and skill development will be used to demonstrate mastery of stds and rubrics would be available throughout the year, which was only one way and it was not ambitious. 5. Applicant failed to provide a quality plan for providing learning resources and instructional practices that were adaptable and accessible to all students. Applicant stated that all resources and practices were adaptable and accessible to all students but did not provide evidence of such. 6. Overall, none of the applicants' responses clearly addressed the questions asked in this section and responses were far too ambiguous. Needed overall explanations. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant plan for ensuring all stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and learning resources in/out side of school was inadequate because the applicant did not have a plan. The applicant stated that all tools and resources will be made available on a regular basis. Also, the applicant added that all resources "are" available online to ensure district accessibility. That warrants the question of does the district have the technological capacity. 2. Applicant does not provide a clear plan of ensuring all stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support. Applicant vaguely said staff would be trained on new resources and regular meetings will be held. 3. Applicant's plan for using information technology systems and interoperable data systems was vague and did not answer (c) and (d). <p><i>The applicants responses to this section consisted of ambiguous plans and vague r.esponses</i></p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant presented an approach to continuously improve the project's process through monitoring systems that track pd, teacher competencies, and school and academic performance and an opportunity for ongoing improvement based on evidence of changes in attendance, disciplinary incidents, and decreased dropout rates. That plan was not of high quality because the continuous improvement approach lacked a well thought-out plan. Applicant's plans to measure progress through an analysis of an initial questionnaire were not ambitious and the use of a questionnaire as the sole tools to measure progress does not demonstrate effectiveness. Overall, the applicant did provide a plan for continuous progress but was insufficient because the applicant did not provide ambitious approaches or strategies across the consortium and did not have quality structures in place during and did not list any for after the term of the grant.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

Applicant created a communication chart to demonstrate strategies for ongoing communication/engagement with internal and external stakeholders and the applicant described the process as monthly timelines of communications with all stakeholders. The response was insufficient because this section wanted strategies for ongoing communication and not the process of creating/developing a communication plan.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. Applicant did not describe their rationale for selecting measures, provide explanations to how the measures would provide rigorous, timely, and formative information, or justify how it would review and improve measures over time if insufficiencies exist. Applicant only submitted a chart without explanations.
2. Applicant's submission of the chart only allowed for 1 point in this section because it gave a brief description of the performance measures but no explanations that would lead to rationales and justifications.

Applicant did not have at least 12 to 14 performance measures

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provided a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of grant by seeking an external evaluation firm designed to improve student achievement. Seeking an evaluation firm strengthen their response because it demonstrated that the applicant knew they did not have the capacity to do it on their own. Applicant provided goals/objectives that the evaluation firm needs to evaluate. However, the quality of the 5 leading questions the applicant focused on were not aligned with purpose/reason for proposal. The questions were not rigorous or would reflect measureable outcomes of quality.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <i>Applicant's budget narrative and tables clearly identified funds that would support the project and the applicant narratives and tables were reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implantation of the proposal. Applicant clearly described all funding that would be used as a strand of revenue, and provided clarity identifying funds during the length of the grant. However, the equipment and supplies section of the budget lack clarification because "technology hardware" for \$90,000 was not clear to what type of equipments, and explanation to why iPads were not listed as equipment; instead it is listed as a supply. Also, there were no software/instructional resources/activities listed to support STEM or college/career readiness, which is the intent of the proposal.</i>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The applicant did not provide a plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant only listed funding for the 4 year term of the grant.</i> <p><i>Applicant's response was based solely on funds provided by the grant and did not identify additional funding for sustainability.</i></p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Applicant did not describe a coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed to support their reform plan. The</i> 		

applicant stated that they will employ a Community Liaison to build partnerships.

2. The applicant did identify 5 population-level results for the consortium but were not aligned or supported the applicant's broader proposal. Not really clear how/why the applicant's response addressed this question.
3. Applicant did not address how partnerships would track the selected indicators that measure results at any level, use data to target resources to improve results for students listed in (3)(b), develop strategies to scale the model beyond high needs students and communities over time, or improve result over time. Not really clear how/why the applicant's response addressed this question.

Overall, there was not an existing partnership, therefore, the applicant cannot respond to this section adequately.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did address how it would build of on 3 core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that were designed to improve learning and teaching through a personalized learning environment that had the potential to be aligned with college/career readiness; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access; and decrease achievement gaps across students groups.

The applicant provided a great vision for the proposed grant but did not provide thorough explanations, justifications or sufficient information to support their request. Based on what was submitted, it appeared that the applicant was in the brain-storming phase of the proposal and did not have a well thought out plan for achieving their objective, which led to the proposal as not being competitive enough.

Total	210	62
-------	-----	----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

N/A



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1048MN-2 for Lynd Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Initially the vision statement refers to STEM Education. However, STEM seems to be a minor focus of the grant. The goal of adapting standards and assessments is commendable, but no clear vision of the direction this would go is available. Building a data system and new assessments do not equal reform. The need to recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers is obvious and important. However, this does not reflect true reform. The vision does not indicate any innovative or unique means for accomplishing this. Adding more evaluations and more weight on high stakes tests does not represent a clear vision for reform. These are important and worthy goals but no clear vision for how or why is apparent. Professional development seems to be a vital part of the vision statement. However, it seems that there is no clear idea of the content of the professional development or who will be responsible for planning and facilitating the development. Further, the vision that is available is one that does not seem to represent true educational reform. The vision does not indicate ways that the delivery of education will change. It appears that beyond additional assessment and data tracking that the status quo will be maintained. While professional development is mentioned multiple times, there is no indication that the actual act of educating the children will change as a result of the PD. While the applicant does have a plan to assisting students to develop personalized learning plans, changes in standards and assessments and a new data management system, there is no indication of a clear comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The vision, as stated here, does not provide a clear approach to meeting the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity. Score 2/10 based on lack of clarity of vision and plan for reform that does not reflect changes in how teaching and learning are facilitated.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant meets eligibility requirements in relation to total number of participating students (2975) and participating educators (275). The data indicates that the numbers of low-income families and high-need students is approximately 40%. All schools in the consortium as well as the consortium as a whole meet or exceed eligibility requirements in these areas. There is no description of how schools were selected to participate in the consortium. While there is an indication that participation is based on location, no description of the selection process or organizational plan is presented.

Score 8/10 based on eligibility for all schools (and the consortium as a whole) but lack of clarity on selection of participating schools.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Since all schools in the district will be included in the reform, there is no need for a plan to support scaling the plan up to meet all schools. However, the plan is not sufficiently detailed to provide information related to reaching the outcome goals. The logic model lacks detail and clarity. Specifically, STEM opportunities and offerings are mentioned but there is no indication of how these will happen. Also, while several consultants are listed in the plan, there is no indication of the type of consultants or criteria for selecting and hiring them. Further, there is no clear description of the new evaluation system or standards and assessments. While there is time designed in to the implementation plan for developing these, it is unclear of what the goals for these will be.

Score 3/10 based on the lack of specific outcome goals and detail sufficient to know how goals that are in place will be reached.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is just not a clear enough vision to be able to determine the extent to which the applicant's vision improves student learning and performance. Simple statements that things will be done (such as STEM opportunities and increased Professional Development) do not provide clear evidence that the goals will be met. There needs be some vision of the outcome and the steps to reach this outcome. Personal learning plans are a great idea. But, the plan lacks a clear description of how these will be developed and what the plans will entail as well as how they will differ across educational levels (elementary, middle, secondary). Further, there is no information as far as how the students will be assisted in the development of the learning plans or how career and learning goals will be developed. There is no indication that professional development will be available to assist in this process to help teachers facilitate the development of learning plans. In addition, there is no indication of how the implementation of these personal learning plans will result in improved student learning, performance, and increased equity.

There is a mention of partners helping to inform students of opportunities and paths to careers to help move beyond the mostly agrarian population. It is unclear from the plan how these partnerships have been or will be developed and implemented. Further, there is no indication of how these partnerships will improve student learning or help to achieve the outcomes envisioned.

While the plan lists goals for each of the four areas over the course of the grant, there is no indication of how the vision of the partnership

influences these goals or ensures development toward them. Additionally, the data for performance on summative assessments are based solely on the state mandated assessments. There is no indication of the use of the assessments that would be developed as part of this plan to inform performance findings. Further, in some cases, the projected goals are only minimally higher than the current outcomes. (In the case of LEP for Lynd Math, the Post Grant goal is actually below the current percentage.) It appears that there have been significant gains in some of the coalition partners between SY 2010-11 and 2011-12. The report does not indicate what the changes were that facilitated these changes. However, the plan and goals as presented are significantly lower than these increases. The indication is that previous reforms were more effective than those planned.

In no case do the projected goals indicate a decrease in the achievements gap. Goals for decreasing the achievement gap are consistent across all populations and generally do not differ and thus do not decrease this gap. Further, there is no indication that the proposed reforms will help to alleviate these gaps.

In all cases, goals are minimal (only 5% to 6% increase over 5 years). In addition, the vision, as described here does not indicate how the planned reforms will help to achieve these goals.

The score of 3/10 is based on the lack of ambitious goals that will result in improved student learning and performance or increased equity as well as a clear vision for achieving the goals.

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	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Limited evidence – the description of the consortium goals does not indicate success in these areas. (What is given is a list of goals for the consortium.) Further, the data provided (AYP reports) do not give a significant amount of data. No description of this data is provided and there is no indication of raw student data. The data that is available through the AYP reports does not indicate a significant change over the four years (reading increase in index rate from 80.67 in 2009 to 82.46 in 2011, math decrease from 73.99 to 72.23 from 2009 to 2011). This data does not reflect a record of success in advancing student learning and achievement. Further, no data is available for other areas. If the goal is to increase STEM learning in the schools, there must be data to indicate accomplishments in these areas. The plan does not indicate any plans to assess this to determine a baseline for STEM knowledge and skills nor a plan to assess this throughout the term of the grant.</p> <p>The data presented reflects only the consortium as a whole and does not address lowest-achieving schools. Thus, it is not possible to determine the applicant’s ability to achieve the reforms in these schools.</p> <p>There is a plan to make performance data available to students, educators and parents through the proposed data management system. This would serve to inform these individuals of the data but there is no indication of how this would improve participation, instruction, or services to students.</p> <p>Score 6/15 based on the lack of data and failure to demonstrate the applicant’s ability to achieve reforms in the consortium schools (including lowest performing schools).</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium indicates that it is in compliance with the state's requirements for publishing budgets (however, no clear evidence is available). There is no indication of the amount of detail included in these published budgets and thus not possible to know if the current system includes the amount of transparency required for this proposal. The review of information at School Board and community meetings is a good initial step toward transparency. However, the statement that the information outlined in the requirements for the proposal will be reviewed at school board and community meetings does not provide any detail as to how this will be presented or a timeline for making the information available. Further, a plan for transparency requires a plan for gathering and publishing data. This is not evident in the plan. The statement that information is readily available is a bit ambiguous. There is no indication of how information will be shared beyond the community and school board meetings. Based on the fact that some of this transparency already is in place but there is a lack of a clear description of how this will be implemented in response to the requirements of the grant, score 2/5</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

It would appear from the information on the 7-Point Plan that the conditions and autonomy to implement personalized learning environments as described in the plan exist. However, there is not sufficient detail concerning the 7-Point Plan nor the applicant's plan to assure that this is the case. (The letter of support from the state DOE would indicate that the proposed reforms meet the conditions as described by the state.) However, lack of detail does preclude a definite indication of this. There is no indication if proposed development of standards and benchmarks are included in this 7-point plan (based on the detail provided). Score 4/10 based on the lack of detail that supports the claim that conditions and autonomy are met to be able to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While there is sufficient evidence for support of this proposal from stakeholders including the state DOE, mayors of communities involved, and local businesses, there is not much evidence for support from teachers, students or parents. The applicants state that the unions were heavily involved in the preparation, but evidence is not obvious of broad support. Further, there is no real description of how any of these stakeholders were involved in the development of the proposal or of revisions based on engagement and feedback. There is absolutely no evidence that students had any input in the proposal at all. A specific and detailed description of the development and revision process would have been helpful in determining the extent of stakeholder engagement and support. Score 3/10 based on the presence of support from a broad range of stakeholders but no evidence of support from students as well as a lack of indication that any revisions were completed based on engagement and feedback from stakeholders.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The plan describes five gaps that exist for the Project schools. However, there is no real plan for an analysis. The gaps are broad and lack detail as far as the description of how this was determined. There is no indication of how these gaps were identified nor how the applicant will know if the reforms are being implemented and successful. There is no description of the methods of analysis used to determine the gaps nor changes in the gaps. In relation to the stated gaps, there is little specificity as for as what the plan will address nor the logic behind the reform proposal. Score 1/5 based on the lack of evidence of a plan for analysis of current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the lack of any indication of how the gaps were identified or will be addressed. Some credit awarded for the identification of current gaps that the plan will address.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This plan presented here has a strong set of goals for learning. However, there is no clear indication of any plans to change the learning specifically to meet these goals. The plan seems to focus on additional assessments and a data tracking system. While professional development is mentioned frequently, it does not appear that the PD will focus on how to help students reach learning goals. This plan seems to be a "more of the same" type of plan with no vision to really reform education so that students can meet their individual goals or even care to do so.

The vision for Professional Development is sketchy. There is no description of what it will entail.

While STEM is mentioned, there is no indication of how it fits in. From the initial overview it seems that schools may move toward becoming STEM schools. However, the description does not make this clear.

There is no clear explanation or description of the personal learning path. There is no indication of who will facilitate the development of the personal learning paths nor the training involved in becoming a facilitator for this. Personalized plans for students do not seem to be based on anything except standardized test scores and "what do you want to be when you grow up". Student involvement is not clear in determining the plan. Beyond access to the data system, there is no clear plan for helping students develop educational plans to help them meet their personal goals and career aspirations. While this could be a great idea, there is no indication that teaching or course offerings will change to meet the determined plans or needs of students.

There is no explanation as to why algebra, geometry history and biology the only courses targeted for end of course tests.

Goals for all students - in each case there is no indication of the specifics. Throughout the entire plan, there is no description of how parents will be involved in the process beyond access to the data management system.

The applicant fails to describe clearly how each of the goals will be met. There is no description or specific explanation of the plan. Further, there is no indication of an understanding of a deep learning experience nor of how schools and teaching will change to allow for this to take place. In addition, while professional development is indicated for teachers to provide access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives, there is no description of the PD or how it will be developed or facilitated.

The variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments are not described. Specifically no approaches are described to determine what high quality approaches to implement or how this will be facilitated in the schools. Further, there is no indication as to whether this is different at each school level (elementary, middle, secondary).

There is no indication of what "high-quality content" entails nor how it "specifically relates to STEM". Further, there is no indication of how critical academic content will be addressed or how the skills and traits will be "integrated through personalized learning strategies". Again, no change in the classroom is indicated by the plan. The development of a plan does not translate to academic success without a plan to change what is going on in the classroom.

While the plan indicates that teachers, parents and students will be trained on how to develop individualized instruction based on interpretation of the data, there is no indication that there will be training on how to individualize instruction once the data has been analyzed. Further, there is no indication as to how this will differ at different levels (elementary, middle, secondary).

The learning plan seems to indicate that tracking and managing learning will be assured by simple access to a new data tracking system. While this is one aspect, what the students and teachers do with this information and how schools change to help them "manage learning" are not explicit in the plan.

There is no change described for the teaching, delivery systems or plans and course offerings. Consequently, the LEA cannot expect to motivate students to manage and track their own learning. In order for learning to be assured and to meet the goals there must be changes in the way that students are given opportunities to learn. No change in teaching would indicate that there is no variety of high quality learning approaches or environments.

The plan that is presented here does not specifically address high-need students. The implication from the plan is that the personalized learning plans will accommodate all students. No additional indications for accommodations and high-quality strategies is present. While this does provide for tracking the high-need students, it would not provide a means for decreasing the achievement gap where these students are concerned.

The consortium plan does include a mechanism to allow for students to track and manage their learning. However, there is no indication of how training and support for students will be implemented to ensure they understand how to use the data management system. The plan does indicate that the students will be trained, but there is no description of the way this will occur.

Score 5/20 based on the the fact that there is a plan in place to assess and track student progress and to make administrators, teachers, parents and students aware of the data associated with these. However, the plan does not reflect specific and comprehensive changes to the learning opportunities to assure students success in or motivation for reaching their personal plans. Further, there is no indication of how this will differ across different levels of education.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
---	----	---

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

No details given for professional development. There is a plan to offer this but no information is given as to the number of sessions, timing of sessions, topics of sessions. Further it is unclear who will develop and facilitate the professional development. There is also little given in relation to the development of the annual student growth objectives. The plan does not include any indication of the criteria for developing these objectives nor a plan for implementing. In addition, there is no indication of the specifics as far as achievement of the objectives. As written it would appear that achievement of 100% of the objectives for 100% of the students would lead to bonuses and salary increases. Also, there is no indication of the amount of the bonuses or salary increases for successful attainment of the objectives.

(a) i. Again, there is no indication of the extent of the professional development as far as number of sessions, topics, development or facilitation. The development of a data tracking system does not ensure personalized learning environments and strategies nor ensure graduation on time and college-, career-ready.

ii. Without a clear description of the professional development plan, there is no assurance that the professional development will ensure that

teachers are able to adapt content and instruction. Further, the provision of professional development does not ensure that content will be adapted. There is no comprehensive plan to ensure a shift from traditional educational strategies to more innovative methods.

iii. There is no clear plan for developing new standards and benchmarked assessments. The data system, however, could provide frequent measures of student progress. Again, there is no complete description of the data system that is envisioned and thus it is difficult to tell the extent to which this system would provide the necessary information.

iv. This plan lacks a clear description of how the teacher and principal evaluation system will be developed, implemented, and facilitated. The plan does not seem to include evaluation specific to principals. Further, there is no indication of how success or improvement will be measured or how the findings of evaluation will inform practices within the classrooms, schools, districts or coalition.

(b) i. There is no list of the tools and resources that will be used to provide the actionable information. Further, there is no list of what actionable information will be available. This section mentions mentor teachers for the first time. There is no indication of how these will be identified, their roles or if compensation will be a part of the plan.

ii. The applicant fails to give any indication of the learning resources that will be aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Quality of the resources cannot be determined without knowledge of the resources that the applicant intends to use to assure this.

III. The plan does not give any information of the process and tools that will be used to match student needs with resources and approaches. The development of a learning plan does not assure that the processes and tools used in the classrooms will match the needs. While this will help to identify needs, there is no indication of how teaching and learning will be reformed to ensure that the needs are met.

(c) i. If the evaluation system is effective then the information that is needed to take steps to improve effectiveness would be available. However, the plan lacks a clear explanation of this system and, thus does not ensure that this system is sufficient to provide the necessary information.

ii. There is no explanation of the trainings that the school leadership will attend. No information is available concerning the extent of the training, whether it will be developed by members of the consortium or if members will attend conferences and workshops outside of the organization. Further, there is no indication of the types of training, systems or practices that will be a part of the project.

(d) No description of "highly effective teachers" no explanation of "increased compensation" is available. There are no specific dollar amounts associated with increased compensation or bonuses. Further, there are no criteria for measuring effectiveness or hard-to-staff schools. Also, there is no indication of the areas that will be targeted as "gaps in current staffing plans."

Score 4/20 based on the lack of clear descriptions of the approaches that will be implemented to improve instruction. Training is indicated in several instances as professional development but there is no clear explanation of any aspect of this professional development for teachers or administrators. Further, there is no indication of how instructional strategies will be adapted to ensure success. There is a plan to measure and track success and to report this information to faculty, students and administration through the new data tracking system. However, this plan lacks details and specificity. Plans for teacher and principal evaluations lack clarity and detail.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) There is no indication of a structure for governance. Bruce Houck will manage the consortium and other districts will support. But, what role will other districts play in the governance. It appears Mr. Houck have compete control over the governing of the project. This could limit the support and services for other participating districts. The number and roles for project staff is not available.

(b) The fact that the districts will remain autonomous will provide flexibility over the indicated factors. There is no indication that the reform will require that the schools move toward common educational plans or practices.

(c) While the applicant mentions that the formative assessment would not be time based there is no plan in place nor indication of how this would be facilitated for the students. Further the plan to assure remediation or enrichment is unclear.

(d) There is no indication of how the classroom teachers will facilitate the varied schedule for skill demonstration nor of the opportunity for multiple opportunities to demonstrate skill mastery. The applicant says that this will be a part of the learning opportunities for students but no real plan is presented. Further, there is no indication of how this will differ across educational levels. It is unclear if all students at all levels will have the same opportunities and requirements or if there will be a difference for different levels.

(e) The statement that "all resource and practices are designed for use in personal learning environments" does not provide assurance that they are adaptable and accessible to all students. The plan does not indicate how classroom practice and resources will be adapted to meet the

needs of all students.

Score 3/15 based on the fact that sufficient detail is not available to determine if practices, policies and rules will assure that personalized learning is possible. There is assurance of autonomy but other detail is nonexistent.

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

10

3

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant states that tools and resources will be made available to all key stakeholders, there is not indication of how this will occur. Online availability does not ensure that all participants will have access. There is mention of a technology staff person to help assure access to information. However, there is no indication of the specific roles for this individual. Thus it is not possible to ascertain if this is sufficient information and assistance. Further, it is unclear what is meant by the "means for parents to easily export appropriate technology data to whatever electronic learning system they choose." The plan does not indicate that parents will choose an electronic learning system nor that they will be available. While there is mention of plans to train individuals, there is no clear explanation of the extent, content, or responsible individuals for this training. Further, the narrative indicates that all project staff will be serve as technical support. This does not seem feasible in light of the extent of technical support that would be required for this project. There is no mention of online support. The creation of one uniform and comprehensive data system could assist in improving the accessibility of data and ease of training and support.

Score 3/10 based on the lack of detail in describing the plan to create the data system or the plan to assure accessibility for all key stakeholders. The plan does offer the availability of a consortium-wide system which would make the system more manageable and usable to assess the program as a whole.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicants have a plan in place to monitor the project. There is no indication of the members of the "leadership team" or of the "project evaluators". Further, there is no indication of how the data gathered throughout the process (changes in attendance, decreased disciplinary incidence, decreased dropout rates and increase assessment scores) will be evaluated. No indication of acceptable rates is available. There are target goals for some of these, but the plan does not indicate what will trigger changes to assure improvement. Further, there is no plan for "corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant". The plan does offer a comprehensive plan for distributing findings to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Score 6/15 based on the presence of a plan for gathering progress data and sharing information. However, the plan lacks a plan for making changes as needed to assure progress toward attaining goals.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The is admirable that the applicant expresses an intention to develop a communication plan. The chart laying out the plan is clear and comprehensive. However, there is no indication of the parties responsible for developing this plan. Again, there is no clear indication of the members of the leadership team.</p> <p>Score 4/5 based on a strong plan but lack of assignment of responsibility for completing the tasks.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The information provided by the applicant is not comprehensive. Of the "approximately 12-14 performance required' only 4 are listed in the charts provided. Further, Not all subgroups are included in the tables provided. Only performance measures for "All" and the K-3 subgroups are provided. Further, the applicant fails to provide any narrative to give the required explanations for each performance measure. Specifically, rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress" are not available. Data and projections for the number and percentage of participating students whose teacher of record and principal</p>		

are highly effective and the number and percentage of participating students whose teacher of record and principal are an effective teacher and an effective principal are limited to only two subgroups. There is no data for students in other subgroups. Further, there is no distinction between highly effective and effective indicated in the data provided. The two charts are identical and do not give any indication of data in different categories. Performance measures for children preK-3 is incomplete. Since no narrative is present, it is impossible to determine the data to be collected on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. It is unclear what the baseline of 60% represents. Further, the data for behavior referrals is limited to students PreK - 2 and does not include 3rd grade. It is unclear why this is the case. In addition, there is no description or indication of how discipline referrals will be standardized across the individual classrooms, school and districts. I would seem that this is not a valid measure of non-cognitive indicators of growth.

Score 1/5 based on lack of indicators and insufficient explanation and data.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
---	---	---

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The research plan described here does not address the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities. The questions in the research plan are not directly related to those activities funded by the project. While these questions are important to understanding the success of the reform, they do not address student achievement, decreases in the achievement gap, the effectiveness of personal learning plans, changes in teaching and learning opportunities or the effectiveness of the LEP as a whole. This plan does not provide opportunities for the coalition to determine the effectiveness of the different activities, resources, and personnel proposed for the RTT-D funds.

Score 0/5 due to the lack of addressing the RTT-D funded components through the plan described.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant does provide a detailed yearly budget. However, there is no narrative that describes, other funds that will support the project. There is an indication that district and state funds will be used to supplement the funds from the RTT-D grant. However, there is no detail available the extent or amount of these funds. There is no detail to justify the rationale behind many of the requested budget items. While there is a limited amount of rationale in the provided charts, the lack of a detailed budget narrative makes it impossible to determine if the items are reasonable and sufficient. Many of the personnel requests are not supported by the plan as written. The plan does not sufficiently detail the expectations for the staff development specialist, technology coordinator or community liaison to determine the reasonableness of the budgeted salaries. Further, there is no clear detail of criteria for compensation for meeting school performance objective or professional development and activity goals. Further, there is no justification available for awarding superintendents \$3000 for meeting school performance objectives. The travel budget is not justified in that there is no indication of who will travel to the professional development or what these will entail. No external evaluator, data collection company, assessment consultant, technology consultant, or fiscal modeling consultant have been identified nor is there a detailed plan in place to indicate the scope and value of these consultants. While there are 10 days of substitutes mentioned in the budget, there is no indication of this number for professional development opportunities in the plan. Further, there is no specific justification or plan for software to be purchased. There is no way to know if this amount (\$310,000) is reasonable. No mention of a "national education consultant" is available in the plan and an insufficient justification or description are available in the chart provided.</p> <p>Score 3/10 based on the lack of a budget narrative that give complete justification for all requested budget items and the inclusion of items in the budget that do not appear in the plan as presented.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>There is no plan for sustainability. The statement made in regard to sustainability does not give any specific details to ensure that the reforms will be ongoing. The applicant states that a sustainability plan will be developed and gives some broad categories for consideration (redeployment of current funding sources, reallocation of existing teacher incentive funds, reallocation of school revenues, seeking additional</p>		

public funding, and seeking foundation and corporate support) but gives not details nor a plan that will lead to the sustainability of the program.

Score 1/10 based on the absence of a plan that has any detail or foresight for sustaining the program.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

There is no indication that partnerships have been formed with public or private organizations. The employment of a community liaison does not address the partnerships as described. The provided list of population-level desired results does not differ from the expected outcomes as detailed in the program plan. In addition, the listed desired-results do not relate to the partnership described. Since the population-level desired results do not reflect the competitive preference priority the plan for the partnership (3) is not relevant. In addition, the lack of a partnership and unique population-level desired results preclude the applicant from supplying a description of how the partnership would integrate education and other services or from describing how the partnership and consortium would build the capacity of staff in the schools by providing them with tools and supports or from developing ambitious yet achievable performance measures.

Score 0/10 based on the lack of a partnership that would reflect the competitive preference priority as described.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The plan, as described here, does not meet absolute priority 1. The plan is not coherent or comprehensive in the description of how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. The reforms described do not adequately address learning environments that improve learning and teaching. There is a fairly comprehensive plan to have students develop individualized educational plans. However, there is no indication of how these plans will inform teaching and learning. The development of a comprehensive, coalition-wide data tracking system could help to inform stakeholders but there is no coherent plan to train coalition personnel to use the data to inform education nor a plan to use the data to accelerate student achievement or deepen student learning. While professional development is a consistent theme throughout the plan, there is no specific design described. The budget narrative suggests 10 professional development sessions per year but there is not description of how the professional development will be developed, facilitated or the responsible parties. Further, there is no follow-up to professional development to assure that the strategies and information presented will be implemented in the classroom. Overall, goals for the plan do not address the achievement gap or the requirements for high-need students. There is no clear plan to increase graduation rates nor the rates of students entering college or ready for careers upon graduation from high school. Overall, this plan does not have sufficient vision or detail to meet absolute priority 1.

Total	210	62
-------	-----	----

Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form



Application #1048MN-3 for Lynd Public School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Southwest Minnesota Rural RTTP Project (SMRRTTP) sets forth a vision for the success of its students with the four educational assurance areas as cornerstones. It provides explanation for each assurance area and demonstrates a deep understanding and commitment to evaluation systems. For example, in the information about teachers and evaluation it explained they would be evaluated three times and how this would be connected to incentives. It also described an extensive set of ideas about how to strengthen recruitment, development, rewards, and retention of effective teachers and principals. It includes new evaluation systems, bonuses for performance and for working at low performing schools, and it is proposed for implementation in 2013-2014, an ambitious and laudatory undertaking. Their vision for the other two assurances was not of the same quality. For example, it refers to the need to provide high quality professional development but does not target standards and provides no information as to how standards fit into its vision for preparing students. Their vision for turning around low performing schools was simply to enhance the learning of all students. While this is a worthy goal it is not a practical solution for turning around the lowest performing schools. Because of those weaknesses in the explanation of the two assurances the area was judged to be at the middle level of quality.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP chose to include all schools and students in the reform project. They made this decision after discussion at consortium meetings. Full inclusion of all consortium schools and students provides a strong foundation for successful change and reform in rural schools and strengthens the proposal. The data provided were sufficient to determine that students collectively met eligibility requirements. Lists of schools and student populations by grade levels were appropriately provided. This area would have been rated very strong had the applicant provided a more complete description of the process used to determine how many schools would participate. In addition, the extent to which other stakeholders were involved in the decision is unknown. The area was judged to be at the high level of quality.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP decided to involve all schools in the reform effort after meetings and discussions between the districts. Thus, it was not necessary to scale up to reach schools not included in the project. The tables provided were sufficiently detailed to provide evidence that its students collectively met eligibility requirements. It provided the appropriate school and student data needed and a logical rationale for why all schools in the six districts were chosen and why no students were excluded. This provides a strong option for rural schools. The applicant did not provide a theory of change that for how it will improve student learning. And, most importantly, it did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan. The inclusion of all schools and students and a strong rationale merit a high middle rating.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP identified long term goals in the four assurance areas that are logically tied to student achievement. These goals were not strong because they were general and lacked specificity. For example, the goal related to summative assessments described such things as "increasing STEM performance" making it difficult to determine its thrust or value. Annual student performance goals for each district culminating in 2016-2017 were also developed. They were detailed and specific. But they were not ambitious and were sometimes confusing. For example, Lynd's overall math was targeted for a 3-point gain over 4 years and 2 points was targeted for free and reduced lunch students over the same period. There were also significant differences in targets between districts. Some districts targeted a 1 point gain in a given year while another targeted 15 points. While there was a lack of consistency in the districts' targets for growth there was also no narrative to explain why they existed. Also, a number of other targets were not ambitious. For example, college enrollment rates for Hispanic</p>		

students was targeted to be at 47 per cent in 6 years, a gain of only 5 percentile points. Because of these weaknesses the score for goals is in the low middle range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP scored in the low middle level for their track record of success. While it provided AYP index rate goal scores for all students in the consortium for reading, math, and writing and noted that they "had made huge strides" in the districts, SMRRTTP provided no evidence that consortium districts had a track record of success. The performance assessment scores provided in (A)(4)(a) do not show any district having made great strides. For example, while composite scores in reading appear to have risen, scores in math, where more than 30 per cent of the students are not proficient, are relatively flat over a 3-year period. Scores were also difficult to interpret. Results which had items such as "goal index rate." were not clear. There was no mention of any ambitious or significant reforms in low achieving schools or how performance data are made available to students and parents. There was no narrative provided for this section. The lack of information supporting the consortium's track record results in a score in the low middle range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments was scored in the low middle range. SMRRTTP expressed a commitment to transparency and cited Minnesota statutes that require every school board to make public annual budgets with corresponding detail as an important element of that transparency. It also stipulated that each LEA review the information required in the proposal at both school board meetings and community meetings and that all information is readily available to all key stakeholders. Each of these is helpful in meeting RTTD requirements. But there was no explicit plan or strategies to provide a high level of transparency such as providing actual salaries. Because SMRRTTP did not provide strong assurances or evidence that there will be a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments the area was scored in the low middle level of quality.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The extent to which SMRRTTP has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the project was scored at the middle level of quality. SMRRTTP identified a number of elements that impact conditions and the extent to which they have sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement reform that requires personalized learning environments. There is evidence that positive conditions exist. For example, consortium members have worked together to achieve educational excellence for a number of years. That is positive. A recent state report, Redesigning Minnesota High Schools for the 21st Century, highlights personalized learning environments as an important instructional strategy to improve student outcomes. The RTTD project is aligned with the "7 Point Plan for Excellence in Education," the governor's long term vision for Pre-K through 12 in the state, This 7-point plan emphasizes building from the ground up and the importance of teaching and learning. SMRRTTP also identified a number of state thrusts that create a positive environment and conditions for change. These include positive teacher and principal evaluation legislation, new assessments, statewide literacy programs and others. Each of the aforementioned are the types of things that create positive conditions for change and strengthen the proposal. SMRRTTP did not specifically address the extent to which they have sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement reform that requires personalized learning environments. There is no information that indicates they would not have sufficient autonomy. But failure to address this important aspect weakened this aspect of their proposal and resulted in a score at the middle level of quality.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement and support earned a middle level score. SMRRTTP noted that many stakeholders were involved at various points after several years of collaboration between districts. They were identified as families, teachers, principals, superintendents and external organizations. But this area was weakened because no specific activities were provided as evidence of stakeholder involvement. Each of the districts has a collective bargaining agreement and had support letters from</p>		

their teachers' unit representatives. Their presence strengthened the rating for the support element in this area. When both stakeholder engagement and support are considered this area was rated in the middle level range of quality.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

SMRRTTP provided a sound rationale for their analysis of gaps. For example, identification of the gap related to STEM was derived from the need to marry the power of STEM to the needs of a diverse range of career opportunities in an agrarian economy which surrounds the students in the county in which they live. Data systems; teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation system linked to student achievement; development and adoption of new standards and assessments; and personalized learning were each accompanied by a sound rationale for their selection as targets for the project. It did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan. SMRRTTP earned a low middle level of quality in this area.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

SMRRTTP appropriately grounds its approach to enhancing student learning in implementation, evaluation and refinement of assessments of student learning. Their decision to focus on K-3 assessments developed in accordance with district and state grade-level content standards, end-of course assessments for algebra, geometry, U.S. history, and biology, and to refine K-3 reading assessment to Developmental Reading Assessment 2 is thoughtful and strategic. The decision to create a culture that connects assessments to learning and assessments is very wise. The choice to (1) focus on careers and career paths, to identify and pursue learning and developmental goals college- and career-ready standards; (2) involve students in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest; (3) to make diversity part of their experience and to master skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, problem-solving and others, and the strategies for developing and implementing personalized instructional skills; (4) develop and employ content that includes digital learning and is aligned with college- and career-ready standards, is a strong and strategic way to promote instructional effectiveness and help shape a culture that promotes a deep commitment to personalized learning. SMRRTTP's approach to ensuring student access to a personalized sequence of content, high quality instructional approaches and environments and regular ongoing feedback are predicated on the use of their new data system, digital learning content to be developed, and effective staff development. It is difficult to evaluate the extent to which the new data system will perform this critical role. It appears that refinements will be made to ensure its effectiveness. The process described to link high quality content to standards would appear to involve the proper agencies and expertise. This aspect of the thrust to ensure high levels of learning was strong. It also is logical that assessments and regular review of the new student benchmarks as proposed along with instruction on the use of the new data system will support and aid use of the personalized plans. Their strategies were sound and their explanations demonstrated their grasp of the area. SMRRTTP chose to break down their plan into the sub criteria provided in the application. Thus, it was not as coherent as it might have been if these strands been woven together or they had provided a summary. And, most importantly, it did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan. This section was scored in the middle range.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

SMRRTTP earned a middle level score for quality in teaching and leading. Its plan for providing students access and using tools to accelerate learning excellence is based on a sound assumption: "improving teaching and learning will emanate from dynamic and intense professional development for teachers that is role-specific and practiced and reinforced on the job." Under its plan each teacher will develop annual student growth objectives in consultation with his or her principal, the achievement of which leads to bonuses and salary increases. This approach fosters accountability. The elements identified for staff development are an extension of last year's professional development work and are tied to their newly developed data system designed to enhance teacher and principal skills in personalizing learning. It proposes sound approaches: frequent measurement of student progress, use of tools to identify optimal resources and learning approaches that align with standards, and training in how to frequently measure student progress and adjust methodology and improve teacher skill sets. These thrusts will be tied to the teacher and principal evaluation systems where the data will be used to inform teachers and principals of their progress so they can make corrections and adjustments and to determine student, teacher, principal, and district success. These aspects of the plan were clearly described and demonstrated a firm grasp of successful strategies to improve teaching and learning. SMRRTTP's three strategies for assuring educators have access to and knowledge of tools, data and resources to accelerate student learning

(actionable information, high quality resources, and processes and tools to match student learning) are concise, clear, and sound. The third leg of their plan addressed the need to provide educators with the training, policies, tools, data and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment for the purposes outlined in the application. SMRRTTP's proposal to improve educator effectiveness and school culture and climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement and to develop training systems and practices are good choices and their logic and explanations for this were sound. The consortium's proposal to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals by providing bonuses for teachers in hard-to-staff schools and target specialty areas make sense. The strategies it chose and the explanation of these strategies clarified their logic and demonstrated their knowledge of how to improve teaching and learning. SMRRTTP's plan lacked coherence. It chose to break down their plan into the sub criteria provided in the application. If these strands had been woven together or a summary provided it could have scored higher been at the highest level of quality. And, most importantly, it did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan, This section was scored in the middle range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This area was awarded a score at the middle range of quality. SMRRTTP proposes that the Lynd Superintendent manage the consortium with the aid of the curriculum development resources, central office staff and other resources needed. Absent additional information it is difficult to know whether the person designated has sufficient time and expertise to be successful. Nor is it possible to accurately assess the level of support the other districts can and will provide and how well they work together. This results in some weakness in this area but does not significantly diminish the proposed plan. The consortium provided no specific policies or conditions to ensure that school leadership teams have sufficient autonomy and flexibility to function effectively but indicated there was such a need both for each team and among the six teams that will function in the consortium. Formative assessments will be used to check on progress and adjust instruction enabling students to progress and earn credits based on mastery. This strengthens the application. Rubrics and skill development are a viable method for providing students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in comparable ways and the applicant asserts that all resources and practices are designed for use in personalized learning environments and promises to implement processes that will ensure that students have access as they are needed. For each of the sub-criteria related to ensuring that assessment and mastery are aligned and that all students, including English learners and those with disabilities, are provided resources and instructional practices, SMRRTTP provided sound general explanations reflecting their intent to ensure these important elements were met. But they did not provide specific examples of how they would be met. And, most importantly, it did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan, This detracted from the strength of the proposal in this area. It was scored in the middle level range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP provides valid and logical information as assurance that strategies to develop personalized learning will be developed and effectively implemented. First, it has strategies for making tools and resources and data available to all stakeholders; it will be online for those who choose that option. These are sound strategies. As are the number of training efforts, including those focused on resources utilized to provide appropriate level of technical support. The strongest support system, the uniform data system, is designed to ensure that the consortium has an infrastructure component in place to allow schools to use interoperable data systems. Other infrastructure elements identified to assist in accomplishing key tasks included project staff; electronic learning system; data analysis; computer labs; making tools and resources available to all stakeholders; training; making staff available to provide technical support in person, on-line, and via telephone; a hired technology staff person; as well as consultants; community meetings; stakeholder updates; and contact. Scoring for the infrastructure description was in the high middle level of quality.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
--	-----------	-------

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP provided a solid conceptual strategy for ensuring continuous improvement. It aligns the process to ensure fidelity to reform models and packages the core intervention strategies to allow for ease of data collection, validated and reliable data analysis, cross-reporting, and authentic observations. It asserts that monitoring systems are already in place within all six systems to track a number of elements related to professional development, student growth and other key areas. It also identifies valid progress measures. The applicant stated that project evaluators will continuously collect data although it is not clear who they are and what their expertise level is. Other important activities are identified. For example, school staff will be surveyed online to determine buy-in, impact and other important aspects. Progress on the project will be reported through a number of vehicles both on a regular basis and annually. And, most importantly, it did not contain key goals, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties, the elements of a high quality plan, This section was scored in the middle range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Ongoing communication and engagement was strong. SMRRTTP described a communication strategy that involves all stakeholders and is designed to invite them to advise and provide feedback. A multi-year communication plan will be developed and included in the evaluation process. It provides a timeline and activities for developing the plan that begins in the first month and ends with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication plan and revisions where needed. The conceptual design and underlying principles identified are strong. Tasks such as identifying communication audiences, approaches, and persons responsible were omitted keeping it from being a very strong area. It was scored in the high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP provided performance measures for teacher and principal effectiveness and for Pre K-3 achievement and behavioral referrals for a 4-year period. The achievement measures utilized three categories or breakdowns, addressing factors such as "per cent of students with effective teachers" and measured progress over 4 years. Also included were important factors, such as free and reduced lunch and high need. The performance measures fell considerably short of those required (12 to 14). No rationale was provided for why measures were selected (as required) nor was there an explanation of how the applicant will provide timely, rigorous, and formative leading information. Nor was there an explanation about how the information will be reviewed and how measures will be improved over time. These deficiencies resulted in a low rating.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SMRRTTP provided a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments that was detailed and ambitious. Its plan utilized empirical and qualitative methodology and will utilize an external evaluation firm to ensure the reliability and validity of the projects and strategies. It identified five critical evaluation questions aligned with the notice requirements. For example, one question was, "What is the impact of modifying existing human resources, professional development systems, and student achievement record systems?" The district proposed a quasi-experimental design using a comparison group and a time-series model. While a quasi-experimental design is appropriate for evaluating student outcomes, it is not the most appropriate approach for an effort aimed at evaluating district-funded activities A more straight forward approach that identifies how needed adjustments would be identified would strengthen the proposal. The district earned a low middle level of quality rating for this area.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project budget is generally well designed and provides a clear picture of expenditures and a viable tool for understanding project activities and implementation strategies. SMRRTTP makes clear that if funded it will work with the consortium staff to identify future</p>		

financial needs. This is an important aspect and strengthens its proposal. It also stipulates that if funded SMRRTTP will create a plan to guide districts in assuming a larger portion of project costs to set the tone for long-term sustainability. These are important positive approaches. The budget summary provided information that promoted an understanding of how the project will function. Budget allocations provided a clear picture of how the project will be funded and how personnel will be allocated and funded. These strengthen the proposal. There were areas where it was not as strong. For example, in the absence of a narrative it is difficult to know the percentage of FTE that will be utilized to service the project. Expenditures for professional development are provided but there are no significant allocations for consultants and district-wide workshops and other vehicles for delivering staff development. In total, however, the budget was well constructed and logically derived. The strengths of the budget clearly outweighs weaknesses, resulting in a high middle rating.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
--	----	---

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 SMRRTTP asserts that a plan for the reallocation and braiding of state, local, and federal funding will be created during the first year. It advocates for redeployment of current school funding sources, reallocation of existing teacher incentive funds, additional public funding through local tax initiatives and foundation and corporate funding. The consortium demonstrated they understand the need to move to a sustainable effort for it to be successful. That is laudable. But year one may not be the ideal time to initiate a sustainability effort and more specific targeted approaches and strategies will be needed for the project to be sustainable. This area was rated at the middle level of quality.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:
 The competitive preference priority was weak. SMRRTTP proposed a collaborative relationship between the consortium districts as a collaborative partnership. Because it does not propose a public or private partnership with the types of organizations stipulated in the notice (such as civic groups, businesses, and community based organizations) it does not meet the stipulated project criterion and received no points for the first element of that area. The applicant did identify five important outcomes that the project will achieve. These included student achievement. Each of the outcomes was important and achievable. The remaining criteria in this area required a public or private partnership so this area was scored in the low range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:
 SMRRTTP coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core assurance areas to create personalized learning environments that will accelerate student learning. It met the absolute priority by providing evidence they have demonstrated at least middle level strength in a number of key areas that are critical for district reform. They had just one area in which they were judged to be weak and that was in competitive preference. Viewed collectively the proposal was sound and would have scored higher had key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties been specifically addressed. It meets the absolute priority criteria.

Total	210	113
-------	-----	-----

