



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1129SC-1 for Orangeburg Consolidate District Four

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The responses to the four core assurances can be teased out of other sections under Criteria A. However, the application does not provide a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the middle range in this section.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies the four participating LEAs and states that all 21 schools will be involved comprising 10,322 students. Data for each school is displayed and includes all required elements. While all schools are participating, there is no discussion of the process used to come to this decision.</p> <p>Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the medium-range in this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes the Districts Helping Districts (DHD) reform plan developed by the DHD advisory team with representation from each of the districts, stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>A well thought through and detailed high- quality plan includes objectives, activities, timelines, deliverable, and responsible parties. Together with a mission to close the achievement gap, dramatically improve dropout and graduation rates, and transform the lowest performing schools, system-wide reform and change is inevitable.</p> <p>With the goals of 1) Accelerating student achievement, 2) Deepening student learning, and 3) Increasing equity through personalizing learning environments and support, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.</p> <p>Note: Because the proposal includes all schools in the four districts, scaling up beyond participating schools is not applicable.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set a goal of increasing student performance on PASS by 15% in each grade level and each subject area by 2015-16.</p> <p>Unfortunately, currently only 18% of 5th grade students are meeting ELA standards. The goal by the end of the grant is 30% of 5th grade students by 2015-16 - well below the State ESEA goal for 5th grade students. The grade with the highest level of performance in ELA is 3rd grade at 33%. This means that by 2015-16, given that the goals are met, 44% of third grade</p>		

students would meet grade level standards. For African American children, the consortium would expect that just 34% of third grade students will meet ELA standards in 2015-16.

The achievement gap data presented by the applicant had differing levels of granularity and groupings which calls to question if this data can be standardized for baseline and annual reporting. The Union District middle level goals for decreasing the achievement gap are set higher in 2015-16 than in 2011-12 – this must be a mistake. Again, because in some cases there is currently a 30 percentage point achievement gap, reducing that gap between White students and African American students, by just 6 percentage points by 2015-16 is not ambitious.

The graduation rates currently hover around 70% for four of the five districts. The goal in 2015-16 ranges from of 12 to 28 percentage points higher. The district with the lowest graduation rate at 56% has set a goal of 79% by 2015-16. It is unclear how these goals were set. They all seem achievable, but not necessarily ambitious.

College enrollment rates range from 35% to 92%. The goals for college enrollment by the end of the grant range from 4 percentage point increase to 30 percentage points. Again, it is unclear how these goals were set. They all seem achievable, but not all are ambitious. For example, Branchville High School with 89% of their graduates enrolled in college currently, set a goal of just one percentage point increase each year. With a total of 306 students in six grades, this impacts very few students.

Overall, while the goals are certainly achievable, they are not by any means ambitious. In addition, student performance goals are not equal to ESEA State targets. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the low medium 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	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents data from two of the four district’s stating a “clear record of success” which show that between 2009 and 2012 ELA scores in Orangeburg declined by 6.6 percentage points (from 60.7 to 54.1); in Union during those same years ELA scores declined by 3.1 percentage points (from 63.1% to 60%). However, in math the scores improved by 5.4 percentage points in Orangeburg, and by 3.6 percentage points in Union. Unfortunately, this is not a “clear record of success.” In addition, this very small sample of data makes it difficult to generalize.

The applicant clearly discusses the “extreme need for intervention” in both Hampton and Allendale. While no trend data was provided (e.g., charts, graphs) student achievement in these two districts has consistently declined over the last years. Using the track record of success demonstrated by Union and Orangeburg as an example for Hampton and Allendale may provide a local example of improvement, but does not provide a model of ambitious and significant reform.

No trend data is presented regarding success in closing the achievement gap.

A well thought through set of goals are presented to address student learning, closing achievement gaps, improving graduation rates and college enrollment rates. The goals are clearly significant and aligned with the needs of the consortium districts, however most of the measurements are to “increase yearly from the baseline.” Reporting the baseline is important, but without a measurable goal, it is impossible to determine if the reform efforts are ambitious.

While student performance data is reported via student transparency reports on the district website as well as the school report card, there are no details regarding the data contained in these reports.

Overall, this places, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four in the medium range for this section.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium districts demonstrate a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments as evidenced by:

- Making public school expenditure reports for K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.
- Reports are posted for every school on the district websites

- Financial audit reports were included in the application for each of the four consortium districts

Because there are no personnel salaries at the school level provided, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the middle range in this section.

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

The applicant states that the districts have sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning, but provides no evidence of existing laws or regulations that support the statement other than procurement rules.

While the applicant clearly describes its authority to intervene on behalf of low performing schools, there is no link made between low performing school policies and creating personal learning environments.

Upon award of the grant, the plan will be finalized as it relates to policies and procedures in curriculum development in curriculum development, benchmarks, assessments and one to one content delivery for personalized learning environments.

Without demonstrated evidence of conditions and autonomy to implement personalized learning environments, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the bottom of the middle range.

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

The applicant engaged meaningful, diverse stakeholder involvement in the design of its proposal as evidenced by:

- Letters of support included from congressional representatives, mayors, higher education, chamber of commerce, county library, participating schools, teachers, community leaders and parents
- The DHD RTTD Advisory Team garnered the support of 4 districts consisting of 21 schools and 1500 educators
- A consortium-wide teacher survey was administered demonstrating very strong support for the collaborative effort and a willingness to participate in project activities
- The lowest percentage teacher response supporting the initiative was 85% which is well above the requirement for LEAs without collective bargaining representation

The stakeholder engagement and support demonstrated in this application places Orangeburg Consolidate District Four in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a comprehensive state level data analysis, however it neglects to include a high quality plan for an analysis of each LEAs needs and gaps in implementing personalized learning environments.

Aside from the statement that "literacy achievement is a huge gap in SC and upon analysis of our PASS scores also in DHD" there was no mention of the four districts participating in the consortium. While the need for a statewide literacy program is undeniably clear, the applicant does not present any information to determine the logic behind the proposal for the participating LEAs.

Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the low range in this section.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan to improve learning through a balanced learning model in which students learn through online delivery of content and instruction blended with traditional school based learning as evidenced by:

- Creating a common, cohesive curriculum map based on Common Core and delivered through personalized

- environments including web portals, eBooks, distance learning and ePortfolios
- Creating a collaborative assessment bank aligned with Common Core for benchmarks, formative, summative and common assessments
- Enhancing Response to Intervention by building on strategies from SIG initiative, differentiations strategies and continued IEP program for special education students
- Implementing 21st Century learning skills by enhancing activities and mechanisms to provide training and support student to use the Individual Graduation Plan tools and resources

Through the consortium’s existing robust data systems that provides teacher –student match and timely data on student growth, the plans for enhancement to include an online lesson planner that aligns Common Core standards with test data and recommendation for remediation will go a long way to support a standards-based data component for instruction.

While the applicant presents a timeline for the activities, the specific goals, deliverables and responsible parties for each activity are vague.

The plan lacks specific components which link the planned activities to progress toward college and career ready graduation requirements.

While the application discusses how each student’s needs will be met through courses that are provided on-line, the software programs mentioned (Rosetta Stone, DreamBox Math, Learning Today) may not be sufficient to ensure that all students have access to the resources to pursue a rigorous course of study.

The plans for developing systems to support standards-based instruction and assessment are critical to the consortium’s success in achieving its goals. However, the details to ensure student driven success and support are minimal. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the medium-range in this section.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan to support teachers and administrators as evidenced by the following strategies:

- Develop a performance-based evaluation process for teacher and principals and provide training and support to ensure its effective implementation in every school.
- Develop a comprehensive professional development system to support the implementation of an environment of effective and highly effective teachers and principals
- Provide the students at the lowest achieving schools with access to the most effective teachers and principals

Key pieces of this work have to do with creating a support system for teachers and administrators, providing access to a robust professional development framework of ongoing professional development.

The success of this piece is highly dependent on the skills of the Technology Instructional Facilitators (TIFs). If the data analysis “indicates that there aren’t any effective or highly effective teachers or principals as defined in the RFP in the consortium,” it is difficult to understand how the consortium will access enough TIFs to lead the professional development work. As the trainers for teachers and leaders, they will need skills equal to and above highly effective teachers and principals.

While the consortium will develop a superintendent, principal, and teacher evaluation system, the list of components are listed as “at a minimum” which gives the impression that the components of a robust evaluation system to support continuous improvement and highly qualified staff are not solid. In addition, it is unclear how principal evaluations would be considered in the teacher evaluation criteria.

The concept of a personalized learning environment for all students is weak in this section, in fact it seems like an afterthought as opposed to the driving force behind the project. For example, the applicant uses technology as the primary avenue to provide supplemental content to students under the goal of increasing the number of students receiving instruction for effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The plans for developing systems to support teaching and leading are critical to the consortium’s success in achieving its goals. However, essential elements to enable the full implementation of a personalized learning environment for students are minimal. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the medium range in this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant discusses the consortium’s “desire to” implement policies, practices, and the infrastructure that facilitate personalized learning and state that they plan to “redefine” policies and practices to implement performance-based learning.</p> <p>It is unclear how planning for early release Tuesdays and hiring a budget accountant will result in an organized governance structure and school leadership teams with flexibility and autonomy.</p> <p>The applicant plans to evaluate and develop policies and a four year plan is presented to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency based credit • Provide support mechanisms • Establish quality control mechanisms • Expand learning options • Align competencies with higher education • Provide learning resources and practices that are adaptable and accessible to SPED and ELL <p>While the applicant has reiterated the requirements for this section, the specific practices, policies and rules in place in the consortium districts to facilitate personalized learning were not presented. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the medium range in this section.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to build solid wireless infrastructures in each school and district office to support one-to-one tablet initiative so that teachers and students can access curriculum, digital content, distance learning, and online resources and tutorials.</p> <p>All districts currently have data systems to provide parents and students information on student achievement through Parent Portals, and there is a 4-year plan to design, implement and support the initiative.</p> <p>It is difficult to determine how students and parents without internet connectivity at home will access these resources. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the low high range in this section.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has prepared a strong plan for superintendent, principal and teacher evaluation beginning in 2014-15 with summative evaluations beginning 2015-16.</p> <p>The proposal includes a comprehensive set of eight proposed measurements, the rationale, how the measures will provide information, and the goal for the measurement. However, the plan is vague and difficult to clearly understand the intent. For example, one measurement is “the percent of LEAs implementing the Common Core Standards.” The rationale is “2012-13 will be our pilot year with full implementation in 2014-15.” How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information is “Measure will confirm conformity to high level plan.” How the consortium will review and measure over time is “Full implementation in 2014-15 at 100% participation.</p> <p>The proposal does not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments.</p> <p>There is no direct link between the goals of the project and the continuous improvement process. It is difficult to determine the exact process that will be used to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals.</p> <p>The vague response to the criteria caused the Orangeburg Consolidate District Four to score in the top of the low range in this section.</p>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to use formative instructional practices such as learning targets, common formative assessments and summative and benchmark assessments to provide ongoing feedback and engage stakeholders.</p> <p>Aside from providing parent support for college and career opportunities for students is a strategy for communication and engagement, there are no examples of communication strategies, tools, or frequency for the feedback. In addition, there are no examples of community members or stakeholders that will be involved in the ongoing communication.</p> <p>The vague response to the criteria caused the Orangeburg Consolidate District Four to score in the low high range in this section.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal identifies the required number of performance measures for each grade level.</p> <p>Each consortium LEA has identified the 2 required performance measures for HQT. No baseline data and no are set goals until 2014-14. Goal is 40% by the end of the grant. This goal is achievable, but not ambitious</p> <p>The consortium overall has identified 6 program-based performance measures for all LEAs</p> <p>K-3 LEAs have identified 1) Literacy development as measured by state assessment and 2) office referrals. Missing age-appropriate non cognitive indicator of growth). An office referral is not always indicative of physical well being, motor development or social-emotional development)</p> <p>4-8 LEAs have identified 1) proficiency in ELA, and 2) Literacy as measured on PASS, 3) office referrals (some for all grades, some for transition grades only). Missing age-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator.</p> <p>9-12 LEAs have identified 1) FAFSA, 2) On track to college and career (missing the measurement and limited to seniors only), 3) Students starting and completing Career and Technology Education program 4) English I EOC as measured by the number passing, 5) Office referrals for 9th graders.</p> <p>The high school indicators are missing an age appropriate health or social–emotional indicator. None of the indicators include all students in the school. They are all small subsets, such as only "seniors" for career and college ready. This could and should be applicable to all students.</p> <p>Unless office referrals are standardized across all schools, with a very specific set of criteria, which are limited to serious (as opposed to minor) behavioral infractions, the data collected are not a strong indicator of social emotional health. In addition, a four student decrease per year in office referrals seems negligible.</p> <p>While the goals are achievable, most are not ambitious to be on track for career and college. For example, literacy development as measured in ELA at grade three as a critical gateway skill needs to be on track for at least 85% of students and for those schools that have met that goal an ambitious goal would be to move to around 95% of third grade students meeting the goal within four years. The following goals were submitted by the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orangeburg: 51.6% to 70%, • Union: 85.6% to 88%, • Hampton: 52% to 78.5%, • Allendale: 45.3% to 70.3 <p>Applicant did not address how it will review and improve the measures over time.</p> <p>Overall, this places Orangeburg Consolidate District Four in the low range for this section.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal includes the resumes of key personnel and notes that the project manager will be accountable for results. The advisory team will be trained in project management. In addition, an external evaluator will gather information for program improvement.</p>		

The applicant does not include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four has not earned any points in this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Proposal clearly sets out a detailed budget overview and budget narrative for each of the 3 projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1: Learning. Requested budget =\$14,213,278. Other funding =\$1,854,946. Funding to support infrastructure specialist, wireless infrastructure upgrades for each school, distance learning infrastructure, tablets for students and equipment, content experts, and virtual field trips which aligns with the purpose and goals of the project • Project 2: Teaching and Leading. Requested budget: \$11,256,954. Other funds = \$0. Funding to support Technology Instructional Facilitator, teacher salaries for summer boot camp, technology conferences and training for TIFS, Tablets for teachers, TIFs and administrators, license fees for PD, and contracted PD which aligns with the purpose and goals of the project • Project 3: LEA Infrastructure. Requested budget: \$786,983. Other funds = \$0. Funding to support budget accountant, computer and software, grant evaluator, and grant administrator/project director which aligns with the purpose and goals of the project. <p>One-time costs identified as well as operational costs.</p> <p>Investments in tablets are made on annual basis using a grade grouping roll out model.</p> <p>Budgets are reasonable and sufficient to implement the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>The well thought through and comprehensive budget and budget narrative demonstrated in this application places Orangeburg Consolidate District Four in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal addresses sustainability of the project goals for three years after the grant at \$4,302,132 per year for a total of \$12, 906,396.</p> <p>Budget assumptions are identified as are the potential sources such as Title I, Title II and instructional personnel funds, technology support funds. after the term of the grant.</p> <p>The proposal does not include a high quality plan for sustainability containing key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible party for each goal. Therefore, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the medium range in this section.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal includes competitive preference priority project called Students Helping Students in partnership with local technical colleges and the University of South Carolina.</p> <p>The project will build on Orangeburg and USCs already existing program to link pre-service teachers earning their Literacy Teacher endorsement with students below grade level reading in grade 3, 4, and 8.</p> <p>TIFs will develop student mentors for the senior class of the higher education program to mentor 11 & 12 grade students in STEM and Literacy initiatives and college and career readiness. Mentors will be developed for grades 7 and 8 as well as grades 4 and 5.</p>		

Proposal outlines Population-Level Desired Results including academic, social-emotional-behavioral indicators, STEM initiatives, and parent and family health awareness and technology proficiency.

Plans to engage parents and families of participating students will be accomplished through providing Family Technology Fairs once a quarter so that parents and families can have access to the purchased technology.

Overall, this proposal seems disjointed. It is not clear how the activities link together in a cohesive plan for a coherent and sustainable partnership between the consortium schools and USC.

As mentioned earlier, the heavy reliance in this project in the TIFs is concerning primarily because it is difficult to understand how the District will ensure that the new staff members have the prerequisite knowledge and skills to train both teachers and principals, but also because this competitive preference project is one more component that depends on these four people.

The measurement for college and career readiness is unclear. The baseline indicates 88% for Grades 9-12 with an end of grant goal of 94%.

There is no description how the partnership would track the selected indicators for all children within the consortium, use the data to target resources in order to improve results, nor scale the model beyond the participating students.

Overall, Orangeburg Consolidate District Four scores in the low range in this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This application does not directly address the purpose of the grant - to create personalized learning environments aligned to college and career-ready standards. The LEAs in this consortium could benefit from the power of collaborative strength and additional funds, but the key foundational pieces are not in place. The student achievement data overall made a compelling case for improved instructional strategies and high quality teachers and leaders, but the foundational pieces are not in place to take this consortium to a place where tablets for every teacher and student will result in students meeting CCSS standards and being college and career ready.

Total	210	103
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1129SC-2 for Orangeburg Consolidate District Four

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth a clear vision meant to build on SC current INSPIRED RTTT vision, however there are no details listed that articulates the "expanded" approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, or increasing

equity through personalized student support grounded in common/individual student academic interest. The lack of detail for the applicant's stated vision of "expanded" reform is detrimental to the overall comprehensive understanding of the reform vision.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative briefly outlines that all the 21 schools within the districts of the consortium meet the competition's eligibility requirements and have been chosen for implementation of the proposal. However, the applicant does not provide a rationale for choosing all schools. That is a total of 10,332 students who will be impacted in all four core subjects. Further, the applicant provides a table A2 identifying the schools as well as the number/percentage of participating students and educators.

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

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high quality plan for reform which describes the following key goals; a. Implementing college and career-ready standards and assessments, b. Implementing data systems to improve instruction, c. Develop/retain high effective diverse educational leadership and teachers, and d. Infuse great instruction and support systems in all schools in a collaborative effort to meet needs of lowest performing schools. These key goals are accompanied sub goals and each has a narrative which explains how the goal will affect student achievement. Additionally the applicant provides deliverables in the narrative for each key goal. There is a summary of objectives/activities/ timeline/Deliverables/ responsible party listed under A4. Taken together, this is an overall creditable and implementable plan filled with the necessary critical aspects of an actionable plan.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative indicates that the consortium projects rates of gain for all students at 15% -16% over the life of the grant as well as increase high school graduation and college enrollment rates by 5%. The projections from the narrative are not evidenced by all the data from the all tables. These rigorous projections are based on the highest two performing districts with a lower overall 10% projected gain from the lowest district. The lack of explanation for the difference calls into question the ability of the overall vision to result in increased equity of all students. There are tables for performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: Two of the four districts (Union and Orangeburg 4) have a general track record of success over the past four years in the following ways; ten of the total 21 schools have achieved SC Palmetto Silver award for General Performance and/or Closing Achievement Gaps and showing clear and rapid growth in 8 th grade ELA and Math. Hampton 2 and Allendale are struggling with Allendale District ranking as lowest in SC. Still there are gaps in that all districts report at best flat growth at worst a decrease in scores overall in the most recent set of standardized test. There is no evidence of current reform measures within Hampton 2 or Allendale, however the proposal narrative includes strategies to standardize consortium-wide the best practices that have resulted in improved student achievement in Union and Orangeburg 4. The narrative assures that all DHD Consortium districts post student transparency reports on the district website, send home School Report Cards, engage the media and parents with data talks/walls/rooms, and student goal setting sheets. There is a lack of evidence for academic success or current strategies to improve achievement in two of the districts; however the overall conditions for reform, based on the narrative are in place to improve student achievement.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not have a high level of transparency in reporting actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff in that personnel salaries over \$50,000 are open for publication. Otherwise, school level expenditures for K12 instruction are made public on district websites. Financial audit reports are included in the application but there is no evidence concerning how they are made public within the districts.

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

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative cites evidence of a high level of autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements in the following ways; reallocation of budgets, revise district policies and practices, alter collective bargaining agreements, curriculum, budgets, school schedules and calendars, PD, staffing, and school district policies. However, the narrative is not specific about how the policies for low performing schools are/will be applicable to all schools.

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

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has strong evidence of stakeholder support as evidenced by: a.) 85%- 98% overall educator support as reported by analysis of school surveys b.) The applicant has attached numerous letters of support from parent organizations and community based organizations. Additionally, the applicant cited face to face meetings with the district Superintendents and instructional staff to outline and generate support for the proposal. Still there is a lack of evidence for engagement in the development of the proposal, these sessions and surveys are more about *supporting the reforms as opposed to eliciting help through activities which developed the proposal*. While there is a high level of evidence for stakeholder support of the proposal there is limited evidence for demonstrating meaningful engagement in the development of the proposal. Engagement in developing the proposal is critical to stakeholder buy-in this piece was insufficiently evidenced in the proposal.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative addresses the research presented in SC's RTTT in regards to the high rate of poverty and dropouts. Further, the proposal has identified as key goals to address current gaps in achievement as; improve literacy achievement through improved educator literacy prep so that all students have equity in access to high quality teachers. The plan falls short of high quality in that the research is presented but there is no evidence of a timeline or responsible parties monitoring the progress of the reform proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high-quality plan for ensuring that improvement in learning is accomplished through the 4 core areas of the proposal by identifying key goals, deliverables, timelines, and activities within a framework that will be monitored by the Advisory Team, Project Managers, TIFs, Content Experts, and Grant Evaluators. The applicant's narrative outlined a plan of action which falls into the scope of their overarching areas of the vision in such a way that there is clear progression from the vision statement to the activities outlined in this section with deliverables embedded within the description of the activities. The overall basis of the reform for learning is structured in such a way that students will be engaged in web-based personal learning activities supported by better prepared educators and aligned with CCSS curriculum to be assessed by frequent and differentiated systems of benchmark assessment so as to have an increased exposure to diverse contexts and perspectives for motivation and deeper student learning. There is a lack of evidence for sufficient mechanisms to provide students with the training and support necessary to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Additionally, there is no evidence for planning to expose students to diverse cultures. These are critical components necessary for full academic impact of the proposal.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a reasonably strong plan for improving teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Educators will have access to TIF's to support their implementation of personalized learning environments. The proposal calls for a heavy emphasis on developing teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems. Although, the applicant identifies SY 2014-15 as the full implementation target for an evaluation system. This system figures as a critical piece in the proposed plan for improving teaching which call into question the proposed timeline. The overall plan will include frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement. While providing high quality effective educators in the lowest performing school by prepping teachers and principals with a peer support system.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant does address how PD Tuesdays will be scheduled, the narrative does not address how the consortium governance structure will provide support to all participating schools. Further, there is little evidence of providing school leadership teams with necessary flexibility and autonomy over school factors beyond hiring a budget accountant for one participating district. These are critical components of compliance to ensure the proposal will be implemented with fidelity. There is sufficient evidence to document providing students with the opportunities to progress and earn credit based on mastery of content as well as providing learning resources that are adaptable and accessible to all students</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines a reasonably strong infrastructure support plan. The plan outlines key goals, a timeline, deliverables, activities, and framed with responsible personnel. The overall creditable of the plan will ensure that personalized learning will be sustainable.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a weak strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals/opportunities for ongoing correcting/improvement during and after the term of the grant. The proposal calls for a heavy emphasis on developing teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems. Although, the applicant identifies SY 2014-15 as the full implementation target for an evaluation system. Such a heavy reliance on a evaluation system which wont be fully implemented until 2014-14 causes this critical piece in the proposed plan for monitoring progress which call into question the proposed timeline. Additionally, there is no evidence in the narrative that the information will be shared with the public.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant listed activities for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This is a poorly developed component which does not sufficiently explain how or when the activities will take place.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provided evidence of linked performance measures and student achievement, however, there is no evidence of a plan to rigorously, timely, or formatively evaluate progress. Finally, there is no evidence of a plan to review and/or improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant briefly describes a plan to use the Advisory Team and an overall project manager in conjunction with an outside evaluator to monitor the effectiveness of the investment. The evaluator will be charged with development of a tool designed to track results. This is a weakly developed plan to evaluate effectiveness as the applicant has given no thought to the process which might be used.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The Budget and accompanying narratives are very well thought out and detailed. The level of thought and planning for budget spending is detailed for the live of the grant and provides a description of all funds as well as identifies one-time investments. The narrative further explains that the proposal will have additional funding from local and state funding sources for an additional 3 year past the life of the grant		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant briefly outlines in table form a three year budget post grant making use of local, state, and federal funds. The brief nature of the table format indicates a lack of sufficient planning for sustainability of all project goals.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant provided a solid description of a partnership with the University of South Carolina to provide PD for literacy teachers as well as a proposed plan for student to student mentoring to improve not only student achievement but social emotional wellbeing. There is no evidence of a plan to monitor progress toward goals. This is a critical component which is indicates level of comment to the Partnership.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a proposal which coherently and comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas through the use of DHD Advisory Team to create learning environments that will significantly improve		

learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of participating students.

Total	210	134
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1129SC-3 for Orangeburg Consolidate District Four

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative does provide a thoughtful and reasonably coherent vision of reform for the participating LEAs that builds on each of the four core educational assurance areas. Among the application's description of reform items is a commitment to implement Common Core Standards, an online test item bank for common assessments, benchmark assessments, more directly linking highly effective teachers with lowest performing schools, implementing a framework for teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation that use student performance as a factor, and expanded use of data systems to improve instruction. These elements combine to offer a credible approach toward achieving the consortium's goals but the narrative lacks detail in several areas which weaken the presentation. For example, the narrative describes "content experts to develop curriculum resources and instructional approaches" but fails to say who the experts are or how they might be embedded to provide support across all members of the consortium and the third point of the first goal in the chart describes attractive diverse educational leadership but fails to discuss the approach to accomplish this.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The application indicates the consortium's intent to engage all schools within the four participating LEAs in the project and that this will impact 21 schools and 10,332 students. All schools are participating but the plan provides no description of the process undertaken to make this determination as required by the criterion. The application provides evidence of meeting the eligibility requirements of the competition by including copies of execute Memoranda of Understanding from each of the consortium members.
- (b) A complete list of participating schools that meets the requirements of the criterion is provided in the application.
- (c) The application provides the total number of participating students as well as the numbers of participating students from low-income families, high-need students, and participating educators as required by the criterion.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application is to support a consortium where all schools within the four participating LEAs are included in the project, therefore, the plan is scaled to impact district-wide change as required by the criterion. The plan described contains a number of features that will support the applicant's efforts to reach its outcome goals including enhancing technology supports, revising the teacher and principal evaluation systems to support increasing the number of highly effective teachers and leaders, and a strong focus on turning around the consortium's lowest performing schools.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents its vision, in part, through a chart of objectives, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsibilities in support of three goals: accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student learning environment and support grounded in common and individual tasks based on student academic interests. The information provided is coherent, well-integrated and specific. This strongly supports the likelihood that the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning as required by the criterion. However, while the overall annual targets for the two struggling districts demonstrate significant improvement, the goals by the end of the grant period are on the lower end of being reasonably ambitious.</p> <p>(a) The application includes an extremely detailed set of annual summative growth targets for each grade and subject area, disaggregated by each student subgroup as defined in the competition, and for each of the participating LEAs. Orangeburg seeks an average of 18% growth in performance over the term of the grant which is ambitious yet achievable given the baseline data presented. Union enjoys a higher baseline generally and indicates expected growth in the average range of 8%-14% over the life of the grant which is ambitious yet achievable. However, in a few instances, Union's targets are below what would be described as ambitious. For instance, the baseline Math score for African American PK-3 students is 70 and the target over four years is 73.9. The narrative does not offer an explanation of why baseline scores for the 2010-2011 SY in Union are frequently higher than the baseline reported for the 2011-2012 SY. Nor does the narrative explain the rationale for a 25% increase in 8th -ELA scores for African American students. This is clearly an ambitious goal and perhaps achievable. Union also has additional pockets of particularly ambitious goals as in 6th and 7th grade science where the goal is for a 20% increase over the term of the grant. Consistent with Union, Allendale also does not describe why baseline scores for 2011-2012 SY are higher than those for the 2010-2011 SY. Allendale proposes a 25% gain in scores across all subjects, grade levels and subgroups reflecting ambitious yet achievable objectives. Hampton 2 seeks to achieve an average of 15% gains across all subjects, grade levels and subgroups. In the aggregate, the consortium's annual performance targets are clearly stated and meet the criterion for being ambitious yet achievable goals.</p> <p>(b) Each of the participating LEAs provides ambitious annual performance targets for decreasing achievement gaps. In particular, Allendale presents very ambitious targets of a 24% decrease in the achievement gap for elementary disabled students in Math and a 35% decrease in the achievement gap for disabled elementary students in ELA. Similarly impressive goals are set for Union and Orangeburg as well. Hampton 2 does not have as severe an achievement gap as the other three participating LEAs but also presents ambitious yet achievable goals relative to its baseline data.</p> <p>(c) Annual targets for graduation rates for each of the four participating LEAs are ambitious yet achievable, as required by the criterion, and will result in substantially improved results for all students.</p> <p>(d) Orangeburg and Union present annual growth targets that result in an approximate 10% improvement in overall college enrollment rates which is ambitious yet achievable given the baseline data. Hampton 2 already enjoys a high college enrollment rate of 91.5% and seeks to improve this to 100% over the term of the grant. Allendale has the greatest distance to travel with a baseline of 35% and annual growth targets of 5% while would bring the college enrollment rate to 60% over the term of the grant, clearly meeting the requirement for ambitious yet achievable annual goals.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Two of the four participating LEAs in the consortium, Hampton 2 and Allendale, are struggling districts with Allendale being the lowest achieving district in the State. The spirit that is reflected in the value of forming consortia to pursue the objectives of the Race to the Top - District competition is exactly what this application presents by the combination of these four LEAs striving together to improve student achievement for all participating students.</p> <p>(a) Union and Orangeburg present a mixed record of success over the past four years with decreases in PASS scores for Orangeburg and Union between the 2012 and 2011 reporting periods and an overall decrease in student performance between 2009 and 2012. Union suffered a drop in 8th grade ELA scores from 63.1% to 52% between 2009 and 2010 then demonstrates an upward trend but the scores in 2012 are at 60% which is still several points lower than where they started in 2009. The narrative does not explain why this occurred either for Orangeburg or Union. The narrative does indicate that with</p>		

regard to HSAP (High School Assessment Program), 87% of Union students met standard and 84.4% of Orangeburg met standard, both indicating a record of success. Per the note above, Allendale and Hampton 2 do not have a prior four year record of success. The application presents a set of eight ambitious yet achievable performance goals to raise student achievement, increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

(b) The criterion requires evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in the consortium's persistently lowest-achieving schools. The narrative describes a coherent set of strategies to achieve significant reforms going forward but fails to offer evidence of the past four years as required.

(c) The application describes a set of existing student transparency reports that are posted on all participating LEA websites in addition to an array of additional reports that make student performance data available to students, educators and parents as required by the criterion.

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

The application provides complete sets of financial audit data for each of the four consortium members. This information is reported at the District level, is not disaggregated to the school level as required by the criterion, and lacks demonstrated evidence to meet the criterion.

(a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff are not included. Personnel salaries for school-level instructional staff are grouped at the District level as kindergarten programs, primary programs, elementary programs and high school programs but not by individual school as required by the criterion.

(b) The budgets do not identify actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only in the information provided. Consistent with (a), instructional staff is not reported at the school level.

(c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only are not evidenced in the material provided in the application.

(d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level are not presented in the application.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a degree of existing flexibility and autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described including full authority to intervene on behalf of low achieving schools, the ability to reallocate budgets, revise District policies and practices, and alter collective bargaining agreements meeting the requirements of the criterion. However, the plan does not offer specific examples of demonstrated evidence of the described flexibility and autonomy nor does the plan describe how the policies utilized in low performing schools may also be used in the case of non-low performing schools.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The plan describes a DHD Advisory Team but does not indicate who participates on this team, how they were selected, or offer details to support the statement that this team has "participated in an extensive planning process to ensure that each District's stakeholders agree on the strategies and processes launching these new efforts." The narrative states that 98% of the 1,500 participating educators in DHD are supportive of the plan based on teacher, principal, and parent surveys however the survey sample included in the appendix had 124 responses though the responses reflect strong enthusiasm in support of the plan. The narrative fails to fully describe how students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools were engaged or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. The criterion requires evidence that at least 70% of teachers for LEAs without collective bargaining representation, as is the case with the four participating LEAs, but this is not fully presented in the application.

(b) A wide array of supportive stakeholder letters is provided in the application including those from state government, principals, business groups, colleges, parent groups, and religious entities as required by the criterion.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application demonstrates strong evidence of the consortium's analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments including increasing poverty rates, exceptionally high drop out rates, and a large literacy achievement gap among others. The narrative links the awareness of these gaps with the objectives and vision of the plan.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	11
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a)(i) The narrative does not specifically address a high-quality plan to ensure that all students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals as required by the criterion. The narrative describes the consortium's adherence to the State's NCLB waiver and includes a coherent statement for creating personalized learning environments but neither point supports what is asked in this criterion.</p> <p>(a)(ii-iii) The application presents a thoughtful plan for ensuring that participating students are engaged in a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The plan includes online courses and developing modules built on software programs that support student team projects.</p> <p>(a)(iv-v) The application fails to describe any plans to ensure student access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives as required by the criterion nor does the narrative provide sufficient evidence of a plan for how all students will master critical academic content and develop the skills required. The narrative describes an intent to enhance the curriculum through team teaching and supplementing lesson plans with virtual field trips but does not link any of what is described to evidence that would meet the criterion.</p> <p>(b)(i-iii) The narrative describes an array of learning strategies, many of them digitally based, and implies that a personalized sequence of instructional content will be created for each student but fails to provide direct evidence in support of the criterion. The plan does present a variety of high-quality approaches and environments including credit recovery courses, distance learning, and implementing a test portal for common assessments.</p> <p>(b)(iv) The plan includes a strategy to leverage the use of frequently updated individual student data to include an online lesson planner aligned with Common Core Standards along with test data the will provide recommendations for remediation so that lesson plans can provide data driven instruction resulting in personalized learning recommendations.</p> <p>(b)(v) The plan provides a narrative addressing accommodations and quality strategies to support IEPs, consistent with the reform agenda, and aligned with accessibility requirements in Section 508 of the US Federal Accessibility Standard for electronic and information technology as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. But the plan does not successfully link these strategies to ensure that high-need students are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>(c) The application presents weak evidence for a plan that will include mechanisms to provide training and support to students that will ensure they understand how to use the tools are resources provided to them. The plan indicates that TIFs will be available to support students but does not clearly state that TIFs will be available to students within all grades. No additional evidence is specifically indicated.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) The plan addresses a high-quality approach to provide comprehensive training and support as teachers shift to the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and includes strategies that meet the academic needs of each student. The plan uses newly hired TIFs to assist teachers in the use of new technologies, like tablets, for personalized learning, will provide content training specifically with regard to how students will gain access to draw down curriculum and content including project-based learning, streaming video, two-way interactive video for distance learning, learning objects and self-paced objectives.

(a)(ii) The narrative describes the intended use of data to assist educators in adapting content and instruction that will provide students opportunities to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their academic needs. The plan discusses a blended learning model supported by TIFs assisting teachers in the implementation of technology to strengthen personalized learning with an emphasis on project-based learning in addition to other elements.

(a)(iii) The plan does not specify any frequency with which data will be collected in order to best measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The narrative stresses the use of data in evaluative instances for teachers and principals including comprehensive training to support the effective use of curriculum data systems, lesson planning tools, online benchmarks, common, summative, and formative assessments which will contribute toward accelerative student progress and improve the collective and individual practice of educators as required by the criterion.

(a)(iv) The application presents a high-quality plan for improving teacher and principal effectiveness by relying on ADEPT, the State's system for evaluating professional teaching, and PADEPP (Program for Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Principal Performance), to improve educator practice supported by a wide variety of professional development approaches. The consortium states that a data analysis from the current environment indicates that there aren't any effective or highly effective teachers or principals as defined by this notice. Therefore, the plan emphasizes this as a high priority.

(b)(i) Though the plan discusses a number of strategies supported by data, on-line courses, and a strengthened teacher and principal evaluation system, the plan does not link these efforts to evidence that actionable information will be derived that would help educators identify optimal learning approaches or what this actionable information might consist of.

(b)(ii) The plan intends to deploy a substantial new data and technology infrastructure filled with high-quality learning resources, including digital resources, that are aligned to college- and career-ready standards, and indirectly suggests that this platform will allow for tools to create and share new resources.

(b)(iii) The plan talks around the requirement for providing specific evidence of processes and tools to provide continuously improving feedback but does not specifically describe any evidence to meet this criterion.

(c) The application substantively addresses the elements of this criterion to meet the objectives for creating more effective and highly effective teachers and principals. As the consortium presently lacks any teachers that meet this definition, the plan relies on more effective use of the data from the existing evaluation systems to develop a performance-based evaluation process and provide training and support to ensure its effective implementation in every school. The plan describes a robust intent to provide comprehensive training to educators to better utilize the data in determining teacher and principal effectiveness and in providing feedback for continuous school improvement.

(d) As has been mentioned in (c) above, the consortium LEAs lack any effective or highly effective teachers as defined by this notice. The plan presented offers a coherent, thoughtful approach across several elements, technology, data, and strong training support, as the backbone of a strategy to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	2

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The plan fails to sufficiently describe how the central office within each of the LEAs in the consortium will be organized to provide support to the participating schools. The plan describes creating "new schools within existing school infrastructures" but does not provide any details as to how this will work, the elements envisioned for the new schools, and if this innovation will apply to all participating schools. There is no discussion about how the consortium governance structure will be established to support the implementation of the grant.

(b) The narrative states that a large amount of flexibility and autonomy is a goal of the project but does not include sufficient evidence of a plan for how this will ultimately be assured. The statements are encouraging but they are not supported by detail or evidence.

(c) The narrative does not specifically address the requirements of the criterion by providing evidence of practices, policies, and rules that allow students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. What is presented is not evidence of a coherent approach to address this criterion.

(d) The application does not address this criterion.

(e) The application does not address this criterion.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The plan calls for a one-to-one tablet roll out to teachers, principals and students in grades 6-12 over a three year period which would meet the criterion for ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators and other stakeholders, regardless of income, will have access to the education technology infrastructure the plan envisions. Tablet cards will be used for Orangeburg and Union for grades K-5 while Allendale and Hampton will provide one-to-one tablets for K-5 as well.</p> <p>(b) The plan provides for technical support to students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders through content experts from local technical colleges and universities that meet the requirement for this criterion. On-line training features will also be provided to parents and stakeholders while students will also have access to TIFs and course mentors for additional support.</p> <p>(c) Each of the consortium LEAs currently have data systems to provide parents and students exported information in an open data format through Parent Portals but the plan does not address how this information may or may not be used in other electronic learning systems.</p> <p>(d) The plan provides evidence that interoperable systems are currently in place for human resources, student information, budget data and instructional improvement data and that the School Interoperability Framework, supported by the State Department of Education, provides a log-on and accompanying role-specific dashboard across resources.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan presents a strategy for implementing a process to build toward continuous improvement but lacks coherence in several ways. The strategy does not define what is meant by "timely and regular feedback" or how frequently feedback would be collected and shared, beyond mentioning an end-of-year teacher survey which does not meet the threshold of a rigorous, high-quality plan. The narrative language regarding the process to improve ineffective educators is impressive with regard to the strategy to initiate improvements and necessary corrections. The plan does not address how the consortium will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of investments funded by Race to the Top - District.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan does not address the requirements of this criterion and lacks evidence of any strategy for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The narrative presents a list of five items that are essentially non-related to what is asked for by the criterion.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The application provides a weak and insufficient rationale for selecting its performance measures.</p> <p>(b) The narrative includes a heading for a chart that suggests the material included would describe how the performance measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information however none of these required elements is completely or coherently addressed.</p> <p>(c) No discussion is provided in the narrative for how the applicant would review and improve any of the proposed measures over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.</p> <p>The required data for performance measures regarding effective and highly effective teachers or principals is incomplete for all participating LEAs. The LEAs indicate that the numbers of effective and highly effective teachers or principals is not currently available. However, the charts do indicate a target to achieve 60% effective highly effective teachers or principals and 80% effective teachers or principals in each participating LEA by the end of the grant period which is reflective of an ambitious yet achievable goal.</p>		

Eight applicant-proposed performance measures that are applicable to all participating students for each member of the consortium are presented. Three of these have ambitious yet achievable goals while the other five are measures with very high baselines of between 95% and 100% this removing very little room for improvement.

The application meets the requirements for each of the grade-bands and proposes meaningful performance measures with reasonably ambitious annual goals. Some annual goals are not ambitious and are more incremental in nature. For example, the baseline for the percentage of students at Estill High School in Hampton 2 is 7% and the target at the end of the grant period is only 11%. As a general observation, however, the performance measures are appropriate, reasonably ambitious and achievable.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application fails to meet the elements of this criterion. No plan is presented that offers evidence of an evaluative strategy to monitor the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funded activities. The narrative emphasizes the deployment of new technology infrastructure across participating LEAs as well as a strong priority for professional development linked to increasing the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals. However, the application is silent in describing even a minimal level of strategy to evaluate the improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures as required by this criterion.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The budget identifies all funds that will support the project, consistent with what is required by the criterion.
- (b) The budget amounts are reasonable based on the ratio of personnel identified against the participating student population and the equipment and technology investment needed to execute the vision described in the plan.
- (c) The budget narrative falls short of providing a coherent description of investments and priorities. The narrative does not present a full description of all of the funds as required. Funds for one-time investments are not clearly noted versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs incurred during and after the grant period. No discussion of strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments is included. The budget section is primarily a list of expenditures linked to the support they provide to the appropriate sections of the plan with a very limited narrative throughout that might have provided more coherence.

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

The application provides evidence of a thoughtful, high-quality plan to identify an additional \$12.9 million over a three year period beyond the grant to sustain new personnel at each of the participating LEAs, maintenance for technology investments, and annual fees for ongoing, consortium-wide digital content/courseware. The plan includes a budget, assumptions, potential sources and uses of funds as required by the criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- (1) The plan describes an existing partnership between Orangeburg and the Language and Literacy Program at the University of South Carolina as well as the intention to partner consortium-wide with a student mentoring program, Students Helping Students (SHS). These two partnerships clearly support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1 by offering a high level of individual attention to students from high need schools and an increased number of teachers who will have earned their

Literacy Teacher endorsement to help close the literacy achievement gap.

(2) Nine population-level desired results are articulated in the plan for the students in the consortium of LEAs that support the broader proposal. The desired results are both educational as well as social, emotional and behavioral.

(3) The plan fails to provide a strategy that meets the elements of this criterion. The narrative does describe the roll-out of SHS over the grant period but no discussion is offered for how the partnership would track indicators, use data to target resources, scale the model over time or improve results over time.

(4) The plan describes how the partnership with SHS will be embedded in the high schools of each participating LEA in the consortium that will integrate support for both education and social/behavioral issues for participating students.

(5) The plan does not address the elements required of this criterion.

(6) The application includes a chart that describes the consortium's annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for each of the proposed population-level results for students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The plan presented by the consortium, Districts Helping Districts, coherently and comprehensively links each aspect of its vision to the four core educational reform areas. The strategy is based on strong implementation of Common Core Standards and concomitant assessments. There is a strong focus on integrated strategies to address the needs for low performing schools particularly within the two more struggling districts that are part of the consortium. The plan relies on a heavy investment in technology infrastructure to build personalized learning environments for participating students, to assist in more effectively evaluating teachers and leaders, providing more robust professional development, and greatly increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals in participating schools. The application aligns with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements throughout. The consortium seeks to accelerate student achievement in a number of ways and to bring a new depth of opportunities to its students that will result in deeper learning, a decrease in the achievement gap and higher college enrollment rates.

Total	210	121
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