



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1140GA-1 for Pioneer Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant proposes extension of something called "Insight Growth Model" and "Blender Platform" into all schools in its eight school district consortium area affecting 1965 teachers, 157 administrators and 25,086 students. What follows does not meet the standard of a comprehensive and coherent vision as requested in the RFP. The "Insight Growth Model" is not explained nor is it described by the applicant as to how it affects accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, increasing equity through personalized student support or how it might address individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. Since these are all clearly defined in the RFP as targets/issues to be addressed in applicant's vision and are omitted beyond describing "Insight" as a "student, teacher and principal improvement tool currently used by all of the systems in the consortium", applicant earns a low score on this component of the application. If the "Insight Model" already exists in these schools how will the grant application of added funds be different from the status quo is a question not addressed in any comprehensive or coherent manner here. What the applicant will do beyond much more of the same is not clear. The addition of digital devices in sufficient numbers to increase personalized learning for students is referenced but no indication of what will be done by these students with these devices is included. Creation of a comprehensive evaluation model to assess how staff implement the personalization of learning is noted but it is to be developed and apparently doesn't currently exist. Finally, the applicant notes "the systems in this consortium are ready for this change" but doesn't explain why other than that the State of GA has adopted the Common Core Standards.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While applicant includes list of schools and students as required in portion (b) and (c) of the RFP, no description of how decision was made for "all" schools in consortium to participate is noted. Due to this omission no determination can be made as to whether high level of LEA and school implementation will result. No provision for pilot of the plan to combine two data systems referred to here (Insight Growth Model and SRG Blender Platform) is noted rather full implementation across a large population is envisioned for year one of the grant must be presumed. Applicant earns mid range points for addressing students and schools portion of this section but low range for not addressing the selection process.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No plan to "scale up" the Insight/Blender" data collection systems is noted here rather they are simply to be combined to personalize instruction at the student's readiness and interest levels. No reference to a logic model or theory of change was noted here. Due to the lack of goals, timelines or narrative addressing how the proposal will be scaled up to address meaningful district wide reform or improve student learning outcomes this portion of the application receives a low range score.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant addresses (a) with achievable but not very ambitious goal, e.g. two percent growth per year over period of the project. Achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment (b-d) are not specifically addressed by data charts included other than to note in the narrative these factors will be monitored and that students will receive additional instruction. Goals are general and not specifically measurable other than to say they are goals and are being addressed during the term of the project. Applicant notes Georgia's Statewide Longitudinal Data System does not at this time allow attainment of this data to address postsecondary degree attainment but they will include when available. (e). Since only one of the five elements of this portion of the RFP are addressed in any measurable, but not ambitious way, applicant receives low range score.</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	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant reports dramatic gains in student achievement (a) in areas of math and science, in some cases 30-40% gains over preceding three year period, 2009-'12. However, no data related to graduation rates or college enrollment is noted. No specific references to gains in lowest-achieving schools (b) or reference to how this data is made available to students, educators and parents noted here by applicant. Due to these omissions applicant earns score in low medium range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While applicant makes reference to Georgia's open public records laws which require transparency on these elements (a-d), no actual data is provided for any of these categories noted on the RFP. A Georgia open records website is referenced and booklets and brochures for each individual member of the consortium is referenced but no actual examples are supplied. Due to these omissions applicant receives low range score for this element.

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

10

2

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant notes Georgia State law providing local autonomy in the governance of schools but does not state how this autonomy will lead to accomplishment of the project goals. Three of eight systems in the applicants consortium are noted as applying for and receiving charter status but again applicant fails to note how this status specifically addresses the goals of the project envisioned through the granting of general waivers from state law and rules governing decision making. Due to lack of linkage of narrative in this section with personalized learning environments applicant receives low score range on this element of the proposal.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant documents participation of some stakeholders (teachers and administrators), as defined in this RFP as students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools, but omits any reference to students, parents or families participation in the proposal development. Through use of a survey inquiring whether teachers supported or didn't support, applicant supplies data to document 96% faculty support for the proposal. While this high level of staff support is noted the lack of participation or input from other key stakeholders noted above (students, parents and families) earns applicant a mid range score for this portion of the application.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant notes none of consortium schools were in "Needs Improvement" status and that significant improvement has been made for both African-American students and English Language Learner population, but supplies no data to support this assertion other than to note the consortium data follows overall trends in Georgia. Applicant further notes no emphasis has been made by state standards for sub-groups achievement but plans to do so with implementation of Insight/Blender data platforms leading to personalized learning plans for all students. Since reliance on data systems implementation does not in and of itself constitute a high-quality plan or explain how this will happen, applicant earns low score for this portion of the application.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	0
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant fails to supply a plan that encompasses any of the stated components in the application. Discussion of state standards and needs of learners at various grade levels does not constitute a plan. The only reference to what might actually occur as a result of the project is reference to the Insight Growth Model and Blender learning management platform to personalize learning for all. The lack of any address of the criteria during the proposed project for this portion of the application earns points in the low range.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	0
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: Applicant again relies on Insight and Blender programs to address this portion of the application without regard to any of the components specifically stated in the application (C) (2) that must be addressed. Though references are made to the need for teacher training on these systems no specific goals, deliverables, persons responsible or dates for implementation are in evidence here. Discussion of the Insight system and a WestEd Company study of it appear to be directly cut and pasted from company literature and not ties to any activity, goal or outcome of the project. Due to these omissions and failure to address components of the application, applicant earns a low score for this portion of the application.		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	0
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: Applicant proposes personalizing learning for students by hiring additional staff and adding days to school calendars to train teachers. Applicant further notes the General Assembly of Georgia has passed legislation to require school systems to allow students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery or proficiency in a subject rather than by earning credit through seat time and further notes this "move on when ready" approach will required time for consortium schools to adapt but offers no plan to do so. Aggressive credit recovery programs are noted as a means of improving high school completion rates along with multiple options to succeed but again offers no plan to implement such programs other than to note the Blender platform included in this proposal is a vast resource for instruction. Again, failure to address specific components of this portion of the RFP earn applicant a low score.		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	0
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant states all schools in consortium have data systems that meet requirements of this grant. However, applicant notes students lack sufficient numbers of personal "tools of the trade" with reference to data accessing devices to accomplish the goals of the plan. Applicant also notes technical support will be necessary to accomplish this goal but no plan to disseminate this expertise is in evidence. All schools in the consortium have parent accessible data systems but again no plan as to how parents might use these as part of the project to personalize learning, set goals, improve graduation rates, etc. Interoperable data systems are provided by the Statewide Longitudinal Data System that just came on line this academic year according to the applicant but again no reference to how those systems might be used to support the implementation of this project. Since components (a)-(d) are only addressed in a general manner without specific connections to the proposed project applicant earns low point total for this portion of the application.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While applicant acknowledges some method of ensuring the proposed plan is working the only practical strategy noted is to emulate an existing state of GA Assessment of Progress on School Standards (GAPSS) with a local instrument and process of two day intense on site reviews to determine the extent of the proposals implementation by local schools within the consortium. Though the statement that indicators from this analysis would follow performance measures outlined in this proposal is made no provision for how or when this might occur is made. Once again the Insight Program is referenced as a source for data leading to formative inputs resulting in personalized instruction but no plan as to how that might occur is in evidence. A continuous progress monitoring instrument is noted as a tool to accomplish the goal of program improvement and feedback but such a tool is noted only as an aspiration rather than an available existing component to address this portion of the application. Since no strategy other than emulating existing state evaluation procedures and reliance on Insight Program data applicant receives a low range score on this component.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant proposes to facilitate ongoing communications with stakeholders via extension of existing Insight Program and Bender platforms. However, applicant implies neither discreet groups of stakeholders nor two way communications are in existence presently as a result of the employment of these systems since applicant proposes to add these dimensions as part of the project without goals, timelines, performance targets or measures to monitor this RT3 project's communication aspiration for accomplishment. Thus with no strategy for adjustments and revisions to improve the plan applicant earns low score for this component of the application.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant supplies requisite number of performance measures to be assessed but no base line data from which they might be extrapolated. Though these measures appear appropriate to assessing student achievement and staff development no (a) rationale is offered for their selection; no definitive linkage (b) with the proposed plan and no (c) rationale for how the applicant might review and improve the measures over time if insufficient to gage implementation progress thus earning applicant a low medium rating for this component.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant proposes to use current staff to provide continuous effort to evaluate the performance of each school in the consortium's effort to provide personalized learning during the implementation of this plan. However, beyond raising some questions about the effectiveness of the Insight program and Bender platform no strategy as to how, when, where or why is noted. None of the strategies noted in the RFP are referenced, instead only a promise that a system of tracking and continuous feedback will be developed without any reference to when, how or what specifically will be done with the information if and when it is compiled thus earning the applicant a low score for this component.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant identifies (a) local investment in infrastructure to support the plan (979,200); SRG Technologies in kind contribution (4,500,000.) and two million local foundational pre-project expenditures. This total of approximately (b) seven million to support a request for 33 million to purchase extension of two data collection and prescription programs does not appear reasonable and sufficient to execute this plan since plan specifics are lacking as previously noted. Applicant's rationale (c) further notes this investment is one time and will not be required for project continuation beyond the four year period of the grant since the Blender Platform will be completely upgraded, accessed and understood by all educators and supported by SRG Technologies at no cost for a six-year period after the project's conclusion. Applicant earns a medium score for addressing some of the components of this section of the RFP.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant supplies a three year plan for sustaining a full time Instructional Consultant/Trainer to maintain the Blender data system along with a half time Instructional Coach. However, no job description, list of duties or responsibilities are noted as to how these positions might specifically support plan implementation or sustainability. Sustainability plan is reliant on SRG Technologies commitment to provide free services valued at \$ 4,500,000 over a six year period in order to maintain a demonstration site for Blender and related services as the basis for the plan as noted by applicant in this statement: "Program sustainability beyond federal funding is underpinned by SRG Technology's commitment to provide no-cost licensing access to Blender for all participating schools, systems, and educators for a six year period after conclusion of federal funding". No contract, letter, MOU or any other documentation for this premise is supplied. In addition, no state or local further government support is noted. While a plan is in evidence here for sustainability, it lacks detail related to duties and scope of responsibilities for personnel positions funded to support it and no documentation of primary premise, which is ongoing support from SRG Technologies, other than statement noted above from the application. Therefore due to these omissions applicant earns medium points for this portion of the application.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No competitive preference priority data noted.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant fails to clearly and specifically address the needs of students with this project proposal other than to entrust a commercial vendor, SRG Technologies, to supply services that will address the goals noted in the RFP. Applicant's goals which entail mainly extension of the Insight Growth Model and Blender platform, adding digital devices, providing teacher training and institution of a new evaluation system do not in and of themselves clearly and coherently address how the applicant will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to 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; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; nor increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. While applicant supplies extensive demographic data on the school organizations encompassed in the plan the inclusion of a clear and comprehensive schedule of measurable objectives to implement activities leading to the core educational assurance areas noted above is not in evidence and therefore applicant is judged to have "not met" Absolute Priority 1 with this application.</p>		

Total	210	35
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1140GA-2 for Pioneer Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The RESA proposal effectively discussed the adoption of standards and assessments designed to ensure college and career readiness through the discussion about the state of Georgia gaining approval from the federal government to deviate from NCLB to an educational learning plan that focuses on the College and Career Readiness Performance Index. Personalized learning will be incorporated to further the college and career readiness initiative. The Common Core Standards have been adopted statewide with the RESA demonstrating a commitment to the standards through current efforts and this proposal. A comprehensive data system was described for students, teachers, and principal improvement tracking with the project seeking to expand the capacity of the Insight data system to provide student level personalized</p>		

instructional data, as well as teacher-level professional learning data relevant to strengths and weaknesses. The use of the Insight system to track data will be enhanced and supported by a teacher and principal evaluation system that is aligned to the evaluation system put in place through state level Race to the Top funds; therefore, leveraging resources, services, funding, and data evaluation systems. Forty-seven schools have committed to the project that collectively meet the eligibility criteria.

This aspect earned a score in the high range.

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

The response indicated that 25,086 students will be served by the project in forty-seven schools with 1,965 educators and 157 administrators joining together to implement a personalized learning approach to education and learning. Collectively, 100% of students in participating schools qualify for the free and reduced meal program and over 53% of the students are from low income families. A complete list of schools was included in the proposal.

The applicant is addressing schools within the range of the RESA to collectively improve student-learning outcomes through a personalized learning approach. All schools within the nine system group of school districts have been using Insight data for seven years to track learning outcomes and determine what type of support each campus will need to implement a personalized learning approach. As result of the use of the data generated from the Insight system, none of the schools were identified as Needs Improvement.

The response supports the development of a high quality plan because it has utilized relevant data to determine student and teacher needs specific to each campus allowing the program to be tailored for each location. Moreover, the overall goals included in the grant address the identified target population.

The score range is high.

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

The proposal described how the project goals will be met to improve student learning outcomes through the use of Insight data combined with the instructional resources of the Blender platform to personalize learning to decrease achievement gaps for all students. The plan proposes to scale up the program beyond the RESA reach by serving as a demonstration site for six years beyond the grant for other schools to observed and learn about the program. Six goals were stated and the timeline, deliverables, and personnel responsible were provided in appendix 2, as an overall project timeline.

This aspect earned a score in the high range because it demonstrated how project goals may be achieved to improve student learning and how the program will be scaled beyond the students served. An innovative program has been designed that effectively utilizes data to personalized learning for students, as well as teachers and administrators to improve the delivery of instruction.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Six ambitious performance goals were stated addressing student assessment outcomes, support for students falling below standards, addressing achievement gaps, monitoring progress toward graduation, monitoring teacher effectiveness with student outcomes, and monitoring college enrollment. Data was provided illustrating baseline and projected growth patterns for all students and by subject area at the high school level. Moreover, data was provided illustrating expected growth from the baseline data for high school level achievement gaps in graduation for sub groups and overall college enrollment. What was not detected was data illustrating achievement gaps for students based on performance on identified assessments for subgroups.

The score for this aspect was earned in the middle range because data illustrating achievement gaps for all subgroups was not detected to demonstrate equity.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provided evidence for the partner systems in the RESA program that demonstrates growth in student academic achievement over a four year period with some specific data provided for growth within subgroups to show capacity to decrease achievement gaps. Data was not provided to demonstrate growth in graduation rates or college enrollment over a four year period, but it was mentioned that graduation rates have improved throughout the group. The response indicated that all partner school systems have been using Insight data systems for several years to close student achievement gaps, improving learning for all students; therefore, ensuring that all schools meet achievement criteria. Finally, it is clear that data has been made available to teachers and administrators to make informed decisions, but there was no mention describing how students and parents were informed of student achievement data or discussion to illustrate how participation in student outcomes and services have been addressed.

The score for demonstrating a record of accomplishment is in the middle range because discussion on student and parent access to data was not detected in the response and clear data for graduation rates and college enrollment were not provided.

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

The proposal indicated that according to Georgia law, all school districts publish annual reports disclosing financial statements. As an added practice to address the requirements of the RTTT-D, the RESA consortium has committed to ensuring transparency by making school level financial information available to the public for

campus level financial expenditures. However, it is not clear if actual personnel salaries for instructional and support staff, for instructional personnel only, for school level teachers only, and for non-personnel expenditures will be made public per the RTTT-D requirements.

This response earned a score in the low range because the specific items requiring transparency were not clearly specified for public disclosure.

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

Clear capacity for autonomy was demonstrated since the State of Georgia provides for autonomy in the governance of schools to function on a local basis. This autonomy enhances the capacity to initiate a personalized learning approach to education, as described in the proposal. While the State of Georgia mandates curriculum and assessment tools, the instructional delivery approach is determined on a local level.

The response earned a score in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal indicated that teachers, administrators, board members, and community stakeholders on a municipal level were included in the development of the program. In addition, evidence of building level educator support was demonstrated through a documentation provided in the appendix. What was not detected in the proposal was evidence of participation by students and parents in the processes used to determine overall and site specific program plans. Moreover, letters of support and/or commitment were provided from higher education, state, county, and school level entities, but not from parent or student organizations, local business leaders, or other community-based organizations.

The score for this aspect was earned in the middle range because student and parent involvement in the development process was not demonstrated.

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

The plan proposes to continue the use of the Insight system to record data and reporting with upgraded capacity for personalized learning and achievement. Moreover, the data will be made available to students for planning purposes and goal setting. The Insight system will incorporate the Blender platform of content and teacher resources in a manner that allows the data to be linked to resources and teacher training strengths and weaknesses. Since the system has already been in place for 3 or more years in the partner schools, effective use of the data has been demonstrated to ensure ongoing use of data to support program goals necessary for a high quality planning process. In addition the Blender platform has also been established with the project proposing to combine the platforms to create a powerful integrated tool to monitor student learning and teacher effectiveness.

The score was earned in the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal described a high quality plan to ensure students are provided a personalized learning path based on strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Beginning in first grade, the foundation of reading will be established for each student providing a basis for content knowledge to begin, as well as the understanding of the importance of reading to gain more knowledge. Reading plans will be established for all students with support for acceleration and remediation, as necessary. English language learners and students with disabilities will also be completely incorporated into the personalized learning approach that will utilize individualized instruction to meet student specific needs. The plan also proposes to provide language learning for all students including Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, but other language may be pursued based on capacity of each school. Learning a second language is emphasized. More opportunities will be afforded to all students to personalize instruction based on interests and to deepen learning through online access to arts courses or other topics of interest that may be desired. The Blender platform will be utilized to provide this across all schools. If specific courses of interest are not available within the partner schools, outside sources will be acquired. Beginning in middle school and through high school, students will be exposed to college and career readiness studies through the Blender format. The Blender format also includes parental resources. All aspects were easily aligned to the six goals previously provided to ensure the high quality plan is addressed.

The proposal did not clearly describe how students and parents will be provided training on how to use the Insight and Blender platform tools and resources to fully utilize all aspects for creating and monitoring personalized learning plans, which was required in C2c.

The proposal earned a score in the lower part of the high range.

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

A high quality plan was described that utilizes the Insight and Blender platform to inform teachers of student progress on an on-demand basis through the capacity to pull reports relevant to each student for all content and standard areas. A study complete by WestEd illustrated the validity of the Insight growth model designed by RESA indicating that the program is capable of suggesting actions for improvement that are consistent with other school improvement planning process that demonstrate validity. The use of teacher evaluations used in conjunction with Insight reports provides a clear picture of the teacher areas of strength and weakness relevant to determining affect on student gains. The Insight and Blender platforms allow for teachers to access real-time data necessary to determine academic needs,

interests, and learning approaches that support the student in meeting personalized goals for learning, as well as college and career readiness. Teacher and principal practices and effectiveness will be easily determined using the data system since it allows for specific access to reports that indicate teacher and administrator of record.

The Blender platform offers a dashboard approach for teacher, student, and administrator access that is designed for end user ease. Virtual learning options are available to support users in using the system.

Moreover, the system provided training for teachers on how to enter content specific lessons that may be accessed by other educators creating a bank of successful high quality lessons for use by all teachers across the partnership. This allows teachers to access tools and instructional strategies to individualize student instruction without recreating all aspects.

Finally, the proposed system emphasizes the capacity for teachers and administrators to identify areas of need for teacher instruction that will improve student achievement creating the capacity to specifically address teacher professional learning needs to ensure all students are taught by highly effective teachers. This will affect all content areas, as well as special needs and English language learner populations.

The score for this aspect was earned in the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The RESA will align program policies and rules with the existing schools and the State of Georgia. The Georgia General Assembly has declared that student learning will be determined based on mastery and not seat time fully supporting the concept of personalized learning for all students including students with special needs and English Language Learners. The RESA will serve as the district or central office for the program providing service and support for each campus based on need to ensure program success. The RESA will provided several layers of supports to provide training for the Insight and Blender systems addressing content and technical support. Individual schools will have the autonomy to address student content mastery and time spent on topics, determine how to use the extended calendar day for professional development, and teacher and educator contributions to the lesson bank.</p> <p>Use of the Insight and Blender resources will be made accessible to students and parents for personalized learning plans for all students with access to differentiated resources for English language learners and students with disabilities.</p> <p>The score for this aspect was earned in the high range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The RESA has demonstrated that all partner schools have a robust data system that is utilized at all 47 campuses involved in the grant ensuring interoperability between locations for resources and service sharing. The system provides a wide range of secure access for each type of user including student, parent, teacher, principal, district, and program level data. Proper security precautions have been described.</p> <p>Students will be provided with devices for access if they are unable to acquire them and students owning their own devices will be accommodated for access, as well. The interoperability of the system to allow this sort of access for various personal devices is crucial.</p> <p>This aspect earned a score in the high range because the response demonstrated capacity to provide an infrastructure for access by various stakeholders, providing support for stakeholders to receive technical training for use of systems and ensuring all schools use interoperable data systems to collect all necessary data for the project.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan for continuous improvement described in the proposal was designed to work in tandem with the Georgia Department of Education School Improvement Division to conduct on site observations with a team to evaluate multiple factors with curriculum, instruction, and professional learning communities identified as some of the components. The continuous improvement for this program will work beyond the state to evaluate and monitor the personal learning approach, as well as the teacher effectiveness, technology usage and other aspects relevant to the program to lend credibility to the format of the monitoring progress, while maintaining a familiar expectation for the monitoring process. Using the data from Insight, the evaluation and monitoring process will go beyond summative analysis to provide formative and benchmark assessment capabilities, also lending credibility to the discussed continuous improvement process. Data will be provided in real-time to all users with appropriate access criteria in place to ensure data security ensuring regular timely feedback to inform instruction and allow students and parents to monitor progress.</p> <p>The score range is high for this aspect because it demonstrates capacity to provide the continuous improvement monitoring necessary to create a high quality plan.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

A robust two-way communication system necessary to initiate conversations for identifying and communicating concerns and success relevant to high quality planning was described that allows for data to be shared and viewed by various teachers, administrators, project personnel, students and parents via appropriate interfaces. In addition, the use of newsletters, webpages and meetings were also identified as communication mechanisms for various stakeholder groups.

Engagement strategies such as social media, instant messaging, and chat that effective for engaging in communicating with students were not mentioned. The timeline included in Appendix 2 indicated that continuous improvements would be addressed and the responsible personnel were identified, but specific detail about communication was not specifically addressed.

The score for this aspect was earned in the middle range.

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

The proposal included 23 ambitious, but achievable performance measures that have been designed in accordance to the overall grant goals. Measures were identified and reasonably rationalized for all students, as well as specific performance measures for students in K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grade bands lending credibility for the overall plan to address all student populations.

Detailed tables were provided for each performance measure addressing all subgroups with specific outcome expectations for each year of the grant period and beyond. The tables demonstrate the capacity of the partners to provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information though the increase in the number of highly effective teachers between 2011-2012 and the 2012-2013 school year. Most data provided in the tables demonstrate increases in effective teachers for all subgroups and the school level.

A score in the high range was earned.

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

The response indicated that the program will be continually evaluated to determine if a high quality plan was developed to determine whether the Insight system is being utilized in a manner that identifies teacher and student strengths and weakness; whether the Insight and Blender systems increase student achievement when used together; whether progress toward graduation is being appropriately monitored; and whether the program is providing an individualized learning environment that increases student achieve and graduation rates for all student populations. The tracking system will be used to ultimately determine if the long-term and short-term goals of the grant and program beyond the grant have been achieved. These approaches to collecting and evaluating data, as well as the desire to acknowledge and understand how the system is being utilized relevant to strengths and weaknesses lends credibility to the overall plan to ensure effective practices are being implemented and sustained.

This aspect scored in the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal budget clearly identified all expenditures that requested funds will support, as well as expenditures that will be leveraged through in-kind or matching funds by partner schools or entities. The amounts request are aligned to the proposal with clear rationales provided for each expenditure, as well clear linkage to proposal deliverables through the table that indicates evidence of alignment. All one-time funds have been identified and explained relevant to purpose and expected long-term usage expectations and plans including support for equipment, policies and practices, lesson banks, and professional development structures to name of few of the aspects addressed. Separate detailed budgets were provided for each component such as personalized instruction access, learner driven teaching resources, professional learning for personalized education, and program administration.

This aspect earned points in the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Sustainability of the high quality planning is demonstrated through several articulated practices. First, the development of the Insight system was established prior to the grant proposal opportunity and will be expanded during the grant period to incorporate the Blender platform. Moreover, the company partner for the Blender system has committed to six years of free access after the grant period for the project to serve as a demonstration site to expand the reach of the program for scaling up purposes. Finally, specific RESA funding is proposed to extend the program beyond the grant period for the purpose of instructional coaches and a personalized learning consultant for the schools from the RESA.

No mention was included regarding funding sources on a state and local government level to sustain the program.

The score was earned in the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: This aspect was not addressed in the proposal. A score in the low range was earned.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal clearly demonstrated an alignment with the Absolute Priority 1 to develop and implement a personalized learning approach designed to meet the needs of all students served by the applicant schools. The program was designed to provide a personalized learning environment assisting students to set goals and make plans relevant to college and career readiness criteria. Attention to the four core educational assurances was demonstrated throughout the proposal ensuring a personalized learning approach for students and teachers that is aligned to college and career readiness, while deepening learning through practices that tap into student interests. In addition, a robust data system designed for use by educators, students, and specific stakeholders was effectively discussed throughout the proposal.

The applicant met this aspect.

Total	210	176
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1140GA-3 for Pioneer Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This applicant does a poor job of creating a coherent reform vision.

The project design plan includes seven steps.

1. Expansion of the Insight model – a program designed by the applicant that utilizes student test scores to develop reports indicating student performance and then provides links to professional learning and instructional resources for teachers.
2. Expansion of the Insight model and the Blender platform into a learning management platform.
3. Provide extensive professional learning to teachers and leaders regarding the Insight growth model and the Blender learning management platform.
4. Provision of digital devices
5. Provision of technical assistance to all schools
6. Provision of a parent portal
7. Creation of an evaluation model related to school accountability.

There is no mention of student outcomes. The proposal states the vision involves moving the process of education to an anytime, anywhere environment but fails to articulate exactly how that will be accomplished. The vision presented in this section is entirely focused on the use of the Insight and Blender systems but fails to explain exactly how the systems relate to instruction, student learning, and reform.

The applicant takes considerable care in explaining the current status of the state’s adoption of Common Core standards and assessment practices but does little to explain how this specific project will expand on state expectations.

The project is presented as an expansion of a current system and therefore is not a reform. For the lack of a clear reform vision or explanation of exactly what Insight and Blender programs actually due, this section earns a very low score.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does little to explain how individual schools will implement the proposal other than to state that the project will expand the use of Insight to provide individualized and personalized learning to boost teacher performance. The improved teacher performance will then improve instructional practices that lead to growth in student performance. With that said, however, there are no specific student outcomes per building, grade band, or specific sup-group.

- a. The schools involved in the project are schools already utilizing the Insight system and were involved in the original pilot of the program. They have been identified as schools with a population of 60% economically disadvantaged with a free and reduced lunch percentage of over 50%.
- b. A table of schools is provided. The data is complete and includes student enrollment, high-need students, percentage of students in each LEA that are low income.
- c. The table of data includes the total number of participating students as 25,086. There are no totals at the end of the table to identify the total number of students from low-income families, the number who are high-need students, the total number of educators. The numbers are available at the individual school level.

The applicant has identified the specific data necessary to support that the project will serve students identified as high-needs and from low-income families. The applicant fails to provide antidotal information other than looking at specific demographic data.

The applicant does not receive full credit for this section as there is no explanation of how it will support a high-quality proposal other than to state that all LEAs in the proposal were selected due to their current use of the Insight program.

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

10

2

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide a high-quality plan that will support district-wide change. There is no specific logic model provided. There are no specific student learning outcomes identified. There is still little explanation of what Insight will do other than to state that it is going to be expanded and that it has the capability of analyzing student state assessment data.

There is no theory of change explained or presented. There is a mention of the Blender platform to personalize instruction, but it is not developed in a manner that would suggest any changes to current instructional practices.

Due to the lack of specific student outcomes, explanation of specific instructional practices or content related opportunities, this section receives a low score.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to create a vision that is based in student learning. The vision is based in analysis of student data and centered on improving student test scores and accountability, not on specific student outcomes. While the goals are ambitious and achievable, they lack explanation other than to increase students' abilities to score well on the state exams.

Goal 1: Students will perform at least two percentage points above state average. – There is no baseline data to determine if students are currently scoring above the state average. The state average is not presented so it is possible that students are currently scoring above the state average.

Goal 2: Students who fall below the achievement level will receive additional instruction in areas that are indicated in a Response-to-Intervention model. – This lacks clear explanation of how instruction would change other than to say the Insight model is capable of identifying gaps in achievement.

Goal 3 – Students who fall in achievement gap areas will also receive additional instruction in the gap areas. – again, mentioning that the Insight program is capable of identifying these gaps does not explain how instruction will change or be provided to identified students.

Goal 4 – Schools and systems will monitor each student's progress toward graduation by monitoring student attendance, providing remediation, counseling, and support to bring students who are at-risk to an adequate achievement level. – This goal does mention that students will be matched to teachers' strengths which shows promise, however, these is no explanation of how this will be accomplished or how individual students will gain access to these teachers.

Goal 5 – Monitor teachers' progress in alignment with students' success. Teachers showing deficits will be given additional professional development. – This goal has the potential to allow students to select teachers based on interests but fails to develop further how it will be accomplished.

Goal 6 – Increase college enrollment two percent per year. – Again this goal is not explained in detail nor is there any explanation of how it will be accomplished.

- a. The proficiency status and growth tables presented in this section do indicate goals of increasing student scores. However, the data does not explain what the numbers mean. There is no indication if these are percentages, raw scores, or standardized test scores.
- b. The data tables show a decrease in achievement gaps between subgroups. In many cases, differences in scores are reduced by at least half.
- c. The data provides goals of increased graduation rates in all eight high schools.
- d. College enrollment data provides goals of increased college enrollment for all students and only one sub-group.
- e. There are no data goals for post secondary degree attainment. Applicant indicates data is not currently available through the state reporting system. When available, the data will be used as a baseline. No alumni surveys are mentioned.

While the data included in the tables of this section identify ambitious increases in student test scores, the goals associated with the data fail to provide information on exactly how those goals will be attained. In addition, the data that is provided is not explained. It is not clear if the data is presented in percentages of students achieving proficiency, raw test scores, or standardized test scores. This section receives a middle-high score.

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>The applicant claims significant achievement over the last four years. The data provided appears to support this claim, however, there are only four data points mentioned for each district involved in the project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bullet points are provided to highlight increased in scores for each LEA. However, there is little evidence in addressing achievement gaps. Sub-groups are mentioned in the highlights, but the lack of other data, there is no evidence that the achievement gap decreased. There is no evidence to support significant reforms. There is no discrepancy between schools to indicate which ones are the lowest performing out of the entire group of schools involved in the project. There is no information to indicate performance data has been made available to students or parents. There is no explanation of how data is used to improve participation or services. While not articulated in this section, the applicant indicates that the Insight program does inform teachers of student performance. <p>The lack of complete student data suggests that the information provided may be the exception and not the general rule in terms of demonstrating a clear track record of success. Use of state data information in previous sections conflicts with data presented in this section. Most of the data presented indicates percentage of students passing courses as opposed to performance on state assessments. It is difficult to understand if the increases in percentages of students passing courses are correlated to state assessments identified in previous sections. This discrepancy and the lack of student and parent access to data places the score for this section 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>The applicant relies on state reporting practices set forth by the State Board of Education and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. There is no clear explanation of what exactly is available, only a reference to gather further information at the state website.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No information about personnel salaries by school level is included in the state report or not. No information about personnel salaries for instructional staff by school level is included in the state report or not. No information about personnel salaries for teachers only by school level is included in the state report or not. No information about non-personnel expenditures by school level is included in the state report or not. <p>This section does not provide specific information regarding each consortium member's reporting practices concerning LEA processes, practices, and investments. The only reference to providing the information is mention of compliance with state reporting practices and that information is made available to individuals upon request through Open Georgia within the confines of Federal Law.</p> <p>Lack of specific reporting procedures for individual schools indicate this section earns a low-middle score.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that the State of Georgia provides for local autonomy in the governance of schools. While districts are required to be a part of the statewide longitudinal data system and the single statewide accountability system, schools are allowed provisions to direct instruction at their discretion.</p> <p>A waiver of No Child Left Behind requirements allows districts some flexibility; the state accountability systems in place still require specific assessments. The applicant has provided information explaining new Georgia requirements including a new state law that requires systems to provide a means for students to receive proficiency-based credit indicating students who can demonstrate proficiency will be allowed to move on when ready and not be bound by seat time. These new provisions in the state law support sufficient autonomy for each school in the proposal. The applicant will receive full points for this section.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information concerning the involvement of administrators, Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency staff, and teachers in the preparation of the project, however fails to include any student or family involvement in the formulation of the project plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is no evidence of teacher support through signatures on the application signature pages. There is evidence of direct engagement and support from teachers with the use of an electronic survey seeking teacher support. Response rate was 77% with 96% stating support for the project. There are letters of support from two post secondary organizations; however, there are no letters of support from any form of parent, student, early learning, or other organizations. <p>There is no explanation of how any persons other than Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency employees and district administration provided any input into the design and development of this proposal. There is a significant lack of involvement of students and families as well as other supporting organizations. The lack of such involvement of stakeholders outside of Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency and district administration indicate a low-medium score for this section.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan to improve student achievement. It does provide a plan for the analysis of student test scores that has the potential to improve student outcomes. The proposed logic plan that analysis of student test scores will result in better instruction is not clearly articulated. The proposal states that Georgia is at a crossroads for developing meaningful accountability. It lacks a clear plan of how that accountability will impact student learning in this project. Previous sections provide goals of closing the achievement gap but the plan lacks a clear explanation of exactly what that will look like. There is no clear explanation of how the project will implement personalized learning environments. The lack of this explanation indicates a medium score in this section.</p>		

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

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

<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for improving learning and is extremely vague about how personalized learning environments will actually be achieved. The proposal seeks to expand the use of the Insight data system to analyze student test scores. The second part of the plan is to use the Blender platform to provide teachers with professional development and eventually instructional resources. Nowhere in the plan is there mention of specific plans to involve students in personalized learning environments or an explanation of how that will be accomplished.</p> <p>(a)(i) The plan identifies specific learning targets in reading for elementary levels but does not provide specific examples of how to engage and empower learners other than to state the data will be used to identify and match students to teachers with skills in that area. One paragraph seems out of place as it mentions access to Mandarin Chinese for elementary students.</p> <p>(ii) The narrative indicates a target in the state requirements is that students in grades 1-5 must complete grade-specific career awareness lessons. There is little development of how that will be accomplished other than to say lessons are aligned to career clusters.</p> <p>(iii) The proposal falls short of providing any solid evidence of how students will be involved in any learning experience. There are no student objectives mentioned, no plan to identify specific course or content offerings, no deliverables identified in terms of student learning, no persons responsible identified and no timelines for implementation of student involvement.</p> <p>(iv) There is no mention of inspired learning activities. The only mention to diverse cultures is a mention of availability of Mandarin Chinese.</p> <p>(v) As there are no student learning objectives or content mentioned in plan, there is no evidence that instruction will address goal-setting, teamwork, critical thinking, communication, creativity, or problem-solving.</p> <p>(b)(i) There is no mention of content or skill development in the proposal. The plan continues to state that the analysis of the student data will provide for personalized instruction but fails to articulate how it will be accomplished.</p> <p>(ii) No instructional approaches are mentioned for students. There is no mention of instructional environments or changes to current systems.</p> <p>(iii) The project plans provide for the development of the Blender resources. However, it is presented as a teacher resource to assist in instruction. There is no provision for access to digital content for students. There are no provisions for alignment of specific content or delivery systems to college and career ready standards or graduation requirements.</p> <p>(iv)(A) The project does provide for analysis of student assessment data through the use of the Insight system. As the plan lacks specific time lines of identified tasks, it is undetermined how frequent the data will be analyzed.</p> <p>(B) The plan indicates that the Insight program can identify specific gaps in student performance; however, exactly how those gaps/needs will be addressed is not specifically accounted for in the proposal. There is no mention of what content, instructional approaches and supports will be provided other than to mention the Blender program will have resources available to teachers.</p> <p>(v) There is no evidence that accommodations and high-quality strategies have been developed or identified.</p> <p>(c) As there are no student tools identified or planned in the proposal, there are no mechanisms in place to provide training to students.</p> <p>The plan is clearly lacking any form of student learning goals or objectives. The goals mentioned in previous sections identify how data from student assessments will be utilized to inform teachers of gaps in achievement, there has been no explanation or high-quality plan presented that will address student learning and outcome. Due to the lack of articulated student goals and learning outcomes, this section scores in the low range.</p>		
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(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for improving learning. It does provide plans for addressing the improvement of teaching in the form of professional development for teachers as needs are identified through the Insight program. There is little explanation of how specifically the outcome of the professional development will be applied in terms of personalized student learning environments.</p> <p>(a)(i) The implementation of the Insight data system allows for analysis of student performance data but there lacks a specific explanation of exactly how professional development needs are addressed for teachers who are connected to student achievement gaps. Further, there is no explanation of how that identification of potential gaps or needs correlate to personalize learning environments. There are no specific practices identified on how to provide for those personalized environments or how they will be accomplished and conducted.</p>		
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(ii) Again, there is no specific explanation of how content and instruction will be adapted to meet student needs. The mention of the Blender platform states that it provides a personalized approach to learning but there is no explanation of how that is accomplished. The only explanation is that it appears to be a content repository of instructional assets that will be aligned to standards, however, it is not even clear if students have access to the resources or how they are assigned or identified by teacher and students. It is not clearly articulated on how the resource will ultimately be utilized to impact instruction. No specific learning strategies are identified or promoted.

(iii) Again, the Insight system will be used to analyze student data, however, there is no mention on how frequently it will be utilized, how teachers and leaders will use the data.

(iv) The systems being proposed will provide information and prescribe and deliver units to teachers and administrators. There is no mention of the formal teacher and administrator evaluation systems so it is not clear if the Insight and Blender platforms are part of the formal evaluation system for teachers and administrators.

(b) Additional days will be added to the teacher calendar to provide training on the systems.

(b)(i) Again, the Insight system is geared to identify possible teacher deficits, however, the explanation of exactly what steps take place between identification and professional development are vague. In addition, it is not clear how the Blender platform fits into the series of steps between student and teacher needs identification and ultimate implementation.

(b)(ii) The proposal mentions that resources will be identified and entered into the Blender platform for teachers to access. It does not identify specific instructional items. Open source resources and possibly purchased content may be added, but there is no clear understanding of exactly what resources will be utilized.

(b)(iii) There is no formalized plan to monitor effectiveness of resources placed in the Blender platform. While the proposal indicates that resources would be matched with standards, there is no mention of matching resources to student learning styles or how those resources are actually assigned to students other than to say the Blender platform will match the resources. It is not clear if teachers assign resources to students for individual use or how the use of the resource will be tracked.

(c)(i) The school evaluation systems are not presented in this proposal nor are they present in the appendix. There is no understanding if the Insight system is part of the formal evaluation system or not. There is no mention of the evaluation system being revised or how it will integrate into the current Insight system.

(c)(ii) Formalized training systems are in place to instruct teachers on how to use the Insight and Blender systems. Teachers will then utilize the systems to identify what professional development they personally need to improve instruction. It is not mentioned how that process is monitored for compliance.

(d) The applicant has provided a resource that has the potential to possibly identify instructional gaps in the teaching staff. The project then works to match professional development and instructional assets to specific deficits. The program appears to be a systematic change in current practices. However, there is little mention of how the systems will address hard-to-staff subjects or high-needs schools any differently than any other school or subject.

The applicant has dedicated resources to the analysis of student data and identification of possible teacher deficits through the use of the Insight program. Teachers will be assigned professional development by the system as the system identifies potential deficits in teacher performance. It will also provide identification of student achievement gaps. Resources for the teacher will be recommended by the systems and delivered through the Blender platform. The entire project is based on automation of processes and lacks leadership and networking of human resources. The proposal lacks any mention of maximizing or utilizing professional learning teams or communities to assist teachers who are either intimidated by electronic systems or for those who may lack personal motivation or time management skills to fulfill the assigned professional development sessions. Personal learning styles of the educators is not mentioned or accounted for in the system for either the teacher or the students.

While the Insight and Blender systems automate processes, they do little to account for student and teacher learning styles, necessary support systems, or preferences. The system indicates that students would be matched with teacher strengths but does not mention how the system will support the development of teacher deficits in terms of the human element. The lack of clearly articulated plans to match human resources with the enormous investment in the electronic systems proposed in this application place the score for this section in the middle-high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not proposed systematic changes in current practices that would facilitate personalized learning. The project mentions in several sections that the project has the “potential” to provide for these changes, but no formalized plans are proposed to mandate the changes.

- a. The project plans to add additional staff at the regional service agency level and possibly at school levels. The purpose of the increased staffing is to support the Insight and Blender systems.
- b. The proposal intends to add calendar days for teachers for intense leader and teacher professional learning. There is no mention of adding days or hours for student learning. The project notes that each school has the power and flexibility to decide when to add those days for teachers.
- a. The applicant notes that the state of Georgia has adopted a “move on when ready” approach to education but fails to indicate how that concept will move to implementation in this project. The only mention of such a change in deliver is “ All of the schools in the consortium are fully cognizant that students need multiple opportunities to succeed, and all are open to provide students those multiple opportunities.” The plan fails to identify or even predict if that will take place. There are no provisions for changing the current state of delivery, attendance requirements, or types of lesson delivery.
- b. There is no evidence that any provisions are being made to provide multiple times and multiple comparable ways to demonstrate mastery of standards. There is no mention that traditional learning formats or deliveries will be changed.
- c. The proposal mentions that resources in the Blender platform are differentiated and accessible to English language learners as well as students with disabilities. There is no mention of instructional practices, only resources.

The lack of clearly defined plans for changes in current schedules or delivery of instruction indicates this section earns a low-medium score.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide specific details about supporting infrastructure for personalized learning that is articulated in a specific manner or plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The project mentions that it will provide budget resources to allow access to devices for all who need them. However, there is no mentioned of how or if these devices will be supported away from school. There is no plan articulated concerning support to students or parents concerning technical support for access to the Insight and Blender programs. Previous sections indicate additional staff will be hired to assist schools in the use of the systems, including technology training and support for the teachers utilizing the programs. The project mentions that many of the schools have built their student data technology systems to allow parents to access their individual student's data in an open data format, however, there is no specific information on how those systems are supported. The proposal states that most schools have interoperable data systems and those that do not will upgrade its infrastructure. There are no further specifics about how that will be accomplished. <p>The applicant does not provide for specific information concerning the support of the data infrastructure for any stakeholders outside of teachers. There are no plans or provisions for student or parent training, support, or assistance. There are no plans for on-line technical support or a call center to assist students or parents. The plan mentions that most schools have interoperable data systems but fails to mention how many or identify which schools may need to upgrade their systems.</p> <p>Because of the lack of specific information about these systems and due to the lack of articulated support systems for students and parents, this section scores in the middle range.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans to initiate a plan for school observations similar to the Georgia Assessment of Progress on School Standard. This process is a yearly on-site visit by state department employees where schools and systems are observed and scored on multiple factors.</p> <p>The narrative then goes on to mention that leaders would prefer not to have another two-day process involving as much data as the state review requires. The plan then states that indicators for the assessment would follow the performance measures outlined in the proposal.</p> <p>The performance indicators mentioned in the plan are tied to the specific student data presented in previous sections.</p> <p>The narrative goes on to state that the development of an instrument to monitor continuous progress toward the goals would take some initial time and effort to create.</p> <p>The section does not include information exactly what would be done to monitor project progress, how the plan may be adjusted or how the information would be publicly shared. There is no mention of how professional development; technology or staff investments will be monitored. The lack of a clearly articulated plan for monitoring the project indicates this section receives a middle level score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan includes measures for allowing the Insight program to communicate with parents and students. There is an indication that the communication will be electronic. There is no mention of how communication between parents without internet access or technology skills will be informed of student progress or school activities. The plan also indicates information will be through normal channels including newspapers, web pages, and education meetings.</p> <p>The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan as the deliverables are not specific to student learning until year 3. Even in year 3, the deliverables are not specifically described.</p> <p>Year one deliverables: will be the development of the body of professional learning and the website that will link all stakeholders</p> <p>Year two deliverables: are a fully trained team in each school on the new generation of Blender and Insight.</p> <p>Year three deliverables: will be the superintendent evaluation instrument and the ability for systems to target professional learning to improve teacher effectiveness and thus student achievement.</p> <p>Year four deliverables: no deliverables are included in year four.</p> <p>This section rates in the middle range due to the lack of a plan for non-technology using families.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application contains nearly 200 pages of tables concerning performance measures tied to teacher effectiveness. The data presented is overwhelming as it is broken down by subject, school, and student sub-group. The next section introduces measures of % Absent over 15 days. There is no narrative to indicate why this measure is selected.</p> <p>The following table provides information on a national fitness assessment followed by a table with data concerning students who are on track to college and career-readiness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. there does not appear to be any narrative to support the rationale for some of the measures other than they were suggested or required by the application instructions. b. The measures appear to provide data concerning completion of specific tasks like completing a fitness assessment or monitoring numbers of students who are meeting credit requirements but does little to explain how these measures indicate success in improving actual student learning. There appears to be an over-emphasis on teacher related data as opposed to actual student performance and learning. c. There is no explanation of how the data will be reviewed and improved should measures not be met each year. <p>The data sheets are extensive, however, performance measures do not reach 12-14.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highly-effective teachers and principals 2. Effective teachers and principals 3. % Students absent 15 days or more 4. Number of students completing fitness assessments 5. Number of students on-track to college or career-readiness 6. Number of students completing the free application for federal student aid 7. Number and % of students who earned a diploma with a technology/career seal <p>As there are only seven performances measures listed in the tables and as the tables are not reflective of the performance measures listed in the narrative portion of this section, this section receives a middle level score.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan intends to use staff of the Pioneer regional educational service area to monitor the effectiveness of the professional development processes. It is indicated that evaluation instruments will be created.</p> <p>There is no mention of how staff time may or may not be altered. There are no provisions for modifications of school structures or schedules. The plan primarily focuses on the implementation of the Insight and Blender platforms and how the data and resources from the programs may improve teachers and how it has the potential to deliver personalized instruction but never clearly articulates how that will be accomplished or what it may look like. There is no mention of teacher compensation being reformed or how community partners may play a role in the program. Due to the omission of these topics in this section, it scores in the middle range.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This budget does provide a clear explanation of how funds will be expended. However, funds appear to be spent on product development and not on activities or resources that will directly impact student learning. All expenditures appear to build capacity to potentially impact students and not directly affect current practices in a more direct manner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is a clear explanation of what funds are grant funds and which funds are district funds. <p>(b)(i) There is a clear explanation of how funds will be utilized and from where the funds are coming. However, there is no explanation of potential revenue funds should the Insight and Blender platforms be marketed.</p> <p>(b)(ii) A majority of the funds will be utilized for on-time investments. There is funding marked for extended work days for teachers. There are also several salaried positions at the Pioneer regional educational service agency. After the grant period, a portion of these positions will be retained but not all.</p> <p>There is extreme concern about this budget. The expenditure of over six million dollars to a technology company appears to be a capital investment in the technology company. The plan notes that SRG technologies is “granting” use of the system to schools at no cost for six years past the end of the grant. These seems unreasonable considering grant funds will be utilized for the development of the system as directed by the project partners. The project participants and not the consulting firm that created the coding for the system own the end product.</p> <p>The funds expended for extended contract time are intended for training on utilization of the system. There is no mention of utilizing a train the trainer model where</p>		

schools could then build capacity as a much lower expense. Additionally, there is no budget for the possibility of extending instructional time with students.

The equipment budget seems low considering the size and types of servers and network structures that will need to be in place to support the proposed systems.

Clearly 18% of the total budget provided to a company to develop the on-line system that it appears they will be allowed to own and likely market is not the best use of federal funds nor in the best interests of the project partners. By identifying that schools will be allowed to use the system developed by SRG technologies for six years after the project, it moves the project from an investment in supporting students to an investment in supporting SRG technologies.

This budget provides very little funding to support actual students in terms of tangible resources or human resources such as extended contract time for working with students. For these reasons and for the extremely high percentage of funds going to a development company, this budget scores in the low range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is minimal sustainability planning presented in this proposal. There is an indication that SRG technologies will allow partner schools to utilize the Blender system at no cost for six years. The funding to create the Blender system is being provided by the grant and through input and direction of the project schools and should be owned by the districts and not SRG.

There is some mention of retaining part-time instructional coaches at the LEA levels and one consultant at the regional educational services area to support personalized learning.

There is no mention of how state or local funds will sustain financial support for the system. There is no plan for support and replacement of technology infrastructure that will be necessary to support such a robust technology platform.

The lack of a clearly defined plan to sustaining all aspects of the project, most especially the network infrastructure and on-going teacher training and supports, this section receives a middle level score.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide any narrative for this section. Due to the lack of any information in this section, it is determined that the applicant is not seeking to earn points in this section. No points are awarded for this priority as no information is provided by the applicant.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This proposal does not meet the absolute priority of providing for or addressing how personalized learning strategies, tools, and supports will improve for students.

While the plan does provide for improving the effectiveness of teachers by analyzing student assessment data and suggesting professional development for teachers, it does little to provide an explanation of how specific instructional strategies and supports will be applied in a personalized format. In addition, there is no mention of how content delivery will be reformed to accommodate specific student needs, preferences, or interests.

This proposal does nothing to ensure that after student needs are identified, that systems will be in place to support personalized instruction. The plan is heavy in data analysis but lacks identification of specific learning outcomes for students.

Total	210	105
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