Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1451TX-1 for Raven School

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Infinity Schools-Racing to the Top is a consortium of two independent school districts and two charter schools. Big Sandy ISD and Goodrich ISD are traditional prekindergarten to grade 12 local education agencies (LEAs). Both John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District and the Raven School are residential local educational agencies serving adjudicated youth. John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District has six total schools and one of the six schools serves as a residential treatment center. Raven School serves secondary students in grades 9-12 who are in State custody. Both John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District and the Raven School communicate with parents and case workers. Participating students at the Raven School stay for a six - month term during the calendar year. Students at John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District stay for weeks to an entire school calendar.

The Applicant's reform vision is based on assessing student growth of Consortium students which will focus on transforming their consistently low performing LEAs. As a Consortium of LEAs in a non-RTT state, the Applicant plans to focus on enhancing the Consortium's efforts to educate, gradute and prepare high need students for 21st century college and careers

The Applicant framed their vision around their four Consortium goals including:

1. Increase student achievement in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics as reported in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in all participating local education agencies (LEAs);

2. One participating LEA will increase student achievement in Science as reported in Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

3. Decrease achievement gaps among subgroups in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics as reported in Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

4. Increase the number of students who meet college and career readiness standards as evidenced by an increase in college enrollment

The Applicant provides a detailed logic model that is organized by goal. For each goal, the Applicant clearly identifies the inputs/resources (i.e. staff, purpose of technology, resources); activities (i.e. integration of scientific resources in math); outputs (i.e. provide WEB-based resources for teachers, research-based and standards focused content); and outcome effects (i.e. formative and summative assessments will show a five point increase in achievement per year throughout the grant period and beyond until 95% proficiency).

Although the Applicant lists goals and provides a logic model to depict their goals, the Applicant has not adequately set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas and does not articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant stated that the Consortium makes up three rural LEAs and one mixed geographical location in a non-Race to the Top State.The consortium schools selected include schools from two independent school districts and two

charter schools. Three of the participating LEAs are located in rural communities of piney woods in rural central and rural east Texas. John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District serves students from the panhandle of Texas to central Texas in mixed geographical areas. Four of the John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District schools are located in rural areas and two of the schools are located in urban areas. The consortium of local education agencies includes Big Sandy Independent School District (ISD), Goodrich Independent School District (ISD), John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District, and the Raven School. Although the Applicant provides a list of the participating schools, the Applicant did not adequately describe the process used to select schools to participate which ensures that the participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

The Applicant stated that the project title is Infinity Schools- Racing to the Top because of the "*endless possibilities to implement strategies, structures, and systemic educational reform to personalize learning environments for all* ***2,790 participating students."*** This information does not adequately identify the total number of participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant stated that the Consortium budget reflects the technology that will be used to equalize learning access and equity. Effective teachers and visionary leaders will be able to "*re-prioritize, re-purpose, and refine the imaginable as well as being held accountable for Infinity Schools – Racing to the Top in achieving its educational goals and to ensure that students are college and career ready as evidenced by an increase in college enrollment."*

The Applicant cited the following as evidence of their high quality plan for scaling up meaningful reform to support district-wide change:

1. Consortium of LEAs has district and school – level strategic improvement plans with strategies from pre-kindergarten to postsecondary and beyond for creating, cultivating, and sustaining a culture of achievement
2. Corsortium Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Consortium member LEAs which indicates a commitment to be bound by the Race to the Top –District assurances, to begin implementation on or before 2014 – 2015, and to improve student achievement for all participating students
3. Use of LEAs student achievement data to revision and inspire students to develop a doable blueprint of personalized learning and graduating plans
4. To interrupt poverty for a better future with knowledge and skills
5. To ensure that all participating students are on track to graduate from high school being college and career ready

The Applicant did not provide a high quality plan to adequately describe how their LEA-wide reform and change will build upon lessons learned from past successful reform initiatives, utilize promising practices and research - based reform methods that will be used to implement rigorous and challenging standards and assessments. The Applicant plans to use technology; however the Applicant did not provide a high quality plan detailing how the purposeful use of technology will be a vital tool to engage, accelerate, and deepen personalized learning using differentiated instruction and project-based learning methodologies.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provides a logic model that is organized by goal. For each goal, the Applicant identified the inputs/resources (i.e. staff, purpose of technology, resources); activities (i.e. integration of scientific resources in math); outputs (i.e. provide WEB-based resources for teachers, research-based and standards focused content); and

outcome effects (i.e. formative and summative assessments will show a five point increase in achievement per year throughout the grant period and beyond until 95% proficiency).

The Applicant provided the required data for (a) - (e).

Although the Applicant listed goals and provided a logic model, the Applicant did not clearly tie these components together so that they provide a clear vision that is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup.

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 provided the following list as evidence of past success:

1. Infinity Schools AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) Multi-Year History Reports 2008-2012 in Appendix 2
2. Data from School Improvement Grants indicating that low performing schools are improving
3. In 2011, districts received the following commendations and acknowledgements on the state Academic Excellence Indicator System (Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports attached in Appendix 1) Big Sandy ISD:

    - College-Ready Graduates (Class of 2010)
    - Texas Success Initiative (TSI) ELA
    - Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Mathematics
    - Goodrich ISD:
    - Attendance (2009-10)
    - College-Ready Graduates (Class of 2010)
    - Recommended High School Program (Class of 2010

2 sites, John H. Wood, Jr. Charter District & the Raven School do not receive similar acknowledgements under the state Alternative Education Accountability system and their 2011 ratings are respectively, Unacceptable and Acceptable.

Although the Applicant provided lists of documents as evidence supporting their clear track record of success in the past four years, the Applicant does not clearly describe how these documents contribute to advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.

The Applicant provided the following 2 examples of their efforts to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps:

1. AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System) reports each includes 2 years of data beginning with student academic performance by content and grade level for each campus and for each district. The reports indicate that as a whole, the collaborative demonstrates consistent growth in student academic achievement and a rise in graduation rates.
2. In the absence of State data on college graduation, the Applicant plans to begin collecting this data if funded

These two examples do not provide clear evidence of how the Applicant plans to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment.

To address the LEA track record in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools the Applicant described two of the Infintiy School dsitricts who have been designated as persistently low performing and who were recipients of the SIG grants. In the process of implementing transformational practices, each district achieved improvement and will model and share those successful practices with the other Infinity partners.

To Address the LEA track record in making student performance data available to students, educators (as defined in this notice), and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services, the Applicant states

that LEAs provide print and make available online AEIS and AYP State accountability reports and school report cards for parents and community. Also, pareents receive copies of sudent state assessment reports . The Applicant states that "*One of the major Infinity Schools' collaborative-wide projects is to provide an online portal with access to students' assessment reports so that parents/guardians will have real time information in a usable manner. Data will be aggregated from the following sources:*

- *School and district student information systems*
- *Statewide longitudinal data systems*
- *User engagement of proposed RTT-D programs*

More details and examples are needed to more clearly demonstrate support for criteria (b) and (c) in order to more comprehensively depict the LEA track record of reform in these areas.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant reports that the LEA's addresses the high level of transparancy through reports that provide data which reflect district and campus level expenditures for salaries including teachers, professional support staff, and campus administration. The following reports are examples:

1. The Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) annual report is published at the state and local levels annually (Appendix 1 sample of the most recent 2011 report)
2. District report cards are sent to parents and posted on district websites

Although aforementioned reports are available, the Applicant also provided several charts (reflecting 2011 data) within the narrative listing personnel salaries and expenditures. However, it is not clear how accessible actual personnel salaries and pernonnel expenditures for the school level.

Since the 2011 Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) annual report most recent report, the high level of transparancy includes dated information (i.e the latest report is 2011 and 2012 has almost ended) Dated information is not strong example of high levels of transparancy.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant described how each Consortium school indentified needs and collective the Consortium developed a mission of providing personalized learning environments for students enhanced by technology and transformational reforms. The Applicant states that assurances provided by partner distrits support the successful conditions and will provide sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments including provide flexible scheduling, additional time, and give the schools sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates and ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA and the collaborative. Although the Applicant provided the aforementioned informaiton, this information does not adequately demonstrate evidence of sufficient autonomy .

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant reports the following as evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for te proposal including:

1. Representatives from each partner met to discuss potential initiatives, determine possibilities for moving forward with an application for funding, and ultimately to develop common vision for implementation.

2. Secondly focus group, including students, families, teachers, and principals yielded input from stakeholders on the selection and design of the project initiatives.
3. Since none of the participating districts have collective bargaining or teacher unions collaboration is evidenced by the letters of support from the from each partner district and/or campus found in (Appendix 5, pages 342-346). It is evident in those signed statements that more than the required 70% of teachers from each district and, from the collaborative as a whole, endorse the Infinity Schools – Racing to the Top plan.
4. Appendix 5, Pages 342-346 provides copies of letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education each stating that they support the initiatives as described in this proposal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provided a plan, including the goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties is provided in Appendix 7. The Applicant plans include providing a personalized learning environment digitally, in extended learning time, and within the school day to address closing the gaps among student groups and in individual student learning. The focus of the personalized learning will be prescriptive instruction and lessons based on needs identified by frequent formative assessments. Extended learning times will offer opportunities for re-teaching, supporting mastery of foundational skills, and intervening in correcting misconceptions. Depending on locally identified needs, partner campuses will offer extended learning sessions up to 16 based on those needs. The Applicant provided an inadequately developed plan that needs further development to include solutions and rationales to support listed goals.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's plan includes activities and strategies; however, these activities and strategies do not represent a high quality plan (i.e. Lacks specific goals, timelines, persons responsible) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan does not include an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students. The following is a list of activities and strategies presented:

1. The Consortium LEAS will use a rigorous curriculum with summative and formative assessments aligned to college and career standards. Benchmarks aligned to the curriculum will measure interim progress.
2. Instruction observation to ensure accountability
3. Benchmarks aligned to the curriculum will measure interim progress.. Benchmarks will be administered, data disaggregated, analyzed, and feedback accessed by teachers, parents, and students in order to improve teaching and respond to interventions early
4. Students, parents, and teachers will have access to current and longitudinal data so that student personal needs can be met more readily. Individualized learning and graduation plans as well as timely benchmark results will provide interval stages for students to structure their learning and measure progress toward their goals
5. Teachers will be expected to use benchmark results to diagnose personalized learning needs of students and to assess the effectiveness of their teaching approaches.
6. Provide participating students with deep learning experiences in areas of their academic interests by integrating instructional subjects and strategies, funding streams, resources, and support for consistently low – performing schools
7. Utilize the State Accountability System that includes subgroup population data for African Americans, Hispanics, Whites, Asian Americans, Two or more Races, Title I, Special Education, and At - Risk. The subgroup population achievement data in the Texas Accountability System mirrors the high –need, high poverty, high minority data of the consistently low – performing schools in our Consortium
8. Offer academic core classes, career and technical trades, and learning academies.
9. Project based learning, differentiated instruction, and purposeful use of technology will be primary mechanisms for deep learning experiences for all participating students.
10. Title I, Special Education, Career and Technical Education, and other state and federal funding sources will

maximize resources from the Race to the Top – District funding source.

11. Personalized school support instructional coaches, as reflected in the budget, will provide help to consistently low – performing schools by monitoring learning gains, achievement growth rates, providing expertise in turning around low – achieving schools, and offering on-site technical assistance.
12. Personalized school support instructional coaches will also be additional change agents to ensure a focus on steady, continuous improvement of all student subgroups throughout the grant period to get us on track for success during the grant period and beyond
13. The consortium representative of diverse cultures of African Americans, Hispanics, Whites, and American Indians. In addition to teachers and leaders, technology resources, mentoring, and college tours will be equalizers for participating students to gain exposure to diverse learning environments and various perspectives of others within and externally to the Consortium member LEAS.
14. Mentoring programs will provide role models to inspire, motivate, and deepen student learning work collaboratively and to focus on student mastery of critical academic content, goal setting and goal attainment, critical academic and personal thinking skills, academic problem - solving and conflict resolution, respectful communication with peers and adults, productive teamwork that reflects twenty – first century workplaces, positive ways to express creative gifts, personalized character traits, and healthy habits that lend to short – term and long – term success.
15. The Consortium will use STAAR reporting categories and raw data to make educational judgment about student success and mastery of learning concepts by reporting categories, by subjects as available. In Grades 9 -12, End -of- Course performance has been set to standard
16. Technology assistance will be available so that students can use the technical tools effectively. Teacher effectiveness will be linked to student performance and documented in teacher evaluations.
17. The Consortium will use a sustainable professional development model that looks at frequent learning and ongoing development that empowers teachers to discover and implement solutions.
18. Project Director and leaders in LEAS will actively recruit, retain, and reward effective and highly effective teachers in our high – need, high – poverty, and consistently low – performing schools.
19. Ongoing professional development will also be provided in job –embedded areas to reach Consortium goals.

The Applicant provided a plan, including many activities; however the the plan is not a highly qualified plan detailing the Applicant's approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students and for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant has some elements of a high-quality plan (i.e. Plan includes activities and deliverables but does not include timelines and persons responsible) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan does not provide an adequate description of the Applicant's approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and accelerate student learning based on needs. Examples of planned activities and deliverables include:

1. Comparison of subgroup populations with the White subgroup and State performance until 95% proficiency is mastered as reported in ESEA Reports. The first year of the Consortium's implementation will be devoted to accelerated learning using a rigorous curriculum and assessments. Teaching and instruction will focus on a set of common educational concepts and individual learning using differentiated instruction, project based learning, and technology based learning as reflected by student personal learning and graduating plans. Students will use digital content and concrete, hands – on manipulative.
2. All participating students in the Consortium will take summative and formative assessments. The interim benchmarks will provide frequent data to assess student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice) and to provide information regarding student progress and improvement, and to determine the effectiveness of instruction. Data provided in real time is needed to make objective decisions regarding what is working and what is not.
3. Student feedback regarding their interim progress will reflect on the effectiveness of teachers and principals. Infinity Schools – Racing to the Top will use evaluations of teachers, principals, and superintendents linked to student performance. The evaluation tools will be formal avenues to make recommendations, provide support, and to create intervention measures with a timeline.
4. Infinity Schools – Racing to the Top will assure that all participating educators (as defined in this notice) will have access to, knowledge and skills on how to use feedback data, tools, resources, and professional

development to provide personalized interventions and to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards. Optimal learning approaches for educators will include job – embedded professional development, accessible 24/7/365, and a sustainable professional development model of frequent learning and ongoing development empowering educators to discover and implement solutions that increase their expertise.

5. Educators will swap and share best practices for improving their craft among the LEAS in the Consortium as well as best practices in national and state databases. High – quality instructional content and assessments aligned to college and career readiness standards will be used. Printed and digital instructional resources, as reflected in the budget, will support personalized teaching and learning preferences. Educators will have access to web –based and high – quality curriculum and assessments, with a scope and sequence, aligned to common educational courses.
6. Technology tools will enable instruction and lab experiences to be delivered virtually and provide rich and high quality resources
7. Teacher evaluations will have domains on (1.) Student Engagement, (2.) Learner – Centered Instruction, (3.) Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress, (4.) Instructional Strategies and Resources, Discipline and Time Management, (5.) Professional Communication, (6.) Professional Development, (7.) Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures, and Requirements, and (8.) Campus Accountability. The teacher evaluation system or portfolio system help school leaders and leadership teams assess and to improve, individual and collectively educator effectiveness, and school culture and climate for continuous improvement.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant described practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by Consortium governance structure. Each school/charter district in the Consortium will follow the previously organized LEA administrative structure to coordinate LEA grant services. Consortium services to all LEA's via grant management infrastructure is specific to the lead LEA, the Raven School. Ultimate policy determinations are made by the Raven School Board of Trustees, carried out in executive capacity by the superintendent/CEO. In turn, the vice president of education services and vice president of finance will work with the grant project director to ensure that programming and financial obligations are met. Although the Applicant provided and organization chart,Appendix 4), the Applicant did adequately address:

1. Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic;

2. Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and

3. Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Although the Applicant provided a list of strategies and activities, the Applicant did not provide a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system. The plan did not clearly describe how technology would be made available to economically disadvantaged students and parents in a rural community.

Utilizing an interoperable web portal technology that enables the integration of existing and proposed technology, students and parents will have the capability to communicate with school teaching staff and constantly monitor student progress

1. WEB portal accessibility to all parents, students and school personnel including a comprehensive data warehouse for reporting that support the continuous improvement processes.
2. WEB generated reports on student performance that can be customized to link to benchmarks. The WEB also

allows the user to drill-down to disaggregate, analyze, individualize, student data by student, school, and district.
3. Through the flexible web portal, allowing students and parents to export information in an open data format in one centralized online location.
4. The parent portal, also a centralized communication channel, will act as a news feed conveying important program updates, calls to action, event reminders, and curriculum and learning content.
5. A data warehouse with reporting ability to all stakeholders, while maintaining confidentiality.
6. With the idea of preparing students for college and careers, beginning in middle school each middle school and high school student in the consortium will be able to create a multi-year education plan that is linked to future postsecondary and career pathways.
7. The WEB-based Individual Graduation Plan will provide a structured framework for students and stakeholders to navigate the academic and career interactive planning process through which students, families, counselors, educators and administrators may access student plans across middle and high schools.
8. The flexible web portal is a single environment for all program technology components, allowing educators, counselors and administrators access to a variety of academic and career resources in one centralized online location
9. The interoperable web portal will enable staff to integrate technology by:delivering a unified end-user experience; centralizing communication across schools and districts; and driving utilization by uniting multiple resources in one centralized location.

Although the Applicant provided examples, the Applicant did not provide a high quality plan to support project implementation through LEA Policy and infrastructure to support personalized learning.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provided a plan in the Appendix that describes LEA strategies for implementing continuous improvement process; however, the Applicant does not adequately describe a well developed plan for providing timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goal and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The Applicant states that rigorous continuous improvement will be maintained through program progress checks via regular monitoring visits between the grant manager and LEA superintendent; however, the Applicant does not adequately describe how this plan will be executed.

The Applicant states that quarterly reports will be a written record of progress in each activity available to all stakeholders at each local LEA in the Consortium as well as a compilation of consortium efforts maintained by the grant manager for reporting purposes to USDE if desired. The leadership teams will work within each LEA to include grant activities in annual Campus Improvement Plans, further disseminating grant information to parents and all stakeholders. However, these steps do not represent a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

The Applicant states that the LEA will work with technology providers to implement the following training and implementation supports: Train-the-trainer model, in-person trainings, web-based trainings, on-demand video trainings, best practices documentation, frequently asked questions (FAQs) documents, and tutorials. In large part, the effort to train stakeholders in the usage of the web portal is the effort to communicate information to families concerning student academic progress toward post-secondary possibilities. A bonus to the web portal will be the added ability to communicate to stakeholders a high level of transparency concerning grant goals, activities, timelines, and staff that parents and students may speak with concerning initiatives in progress. The web portal will not replace personal communication such as conferences, rather enhance information sharing regarding progress toward project goals and ongoing corrective action. Although the Applicant provides a list of achieveable activities; the Applicant does not adequately describe how these activities provide a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant states that their interoperable web portal will have a significant part in communicating grant goals, activities, timelines and those responsible for carrying out grant activities. In addition, the web portal will communicate the individual academic progress of students to students and parents confidentially. The portal will allow students and parents to engage the LEA's and colleges in queries and discussion. Through stakeholder agreement, LEA's will be able to track students beyond the PK-12 experience to gauge the success of efforts to assist students toward post-secondary aspirations. By putting laptop and netbook technology into the hands of students, LEA's will be able to give all students and their parents the ability to be in the loop of information and decision making regarding students' academic future. Although the Applicant provides a list of ideas and strategies, the Applicant does not provide a high quality plan (i.e. Lacks specific goals, timelines, and persons responsible) regarding ongoing communication and engagement.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant does describe ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant described its rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. The applicant had the required total of performance measures. Examples include:

1. The Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) is a highly reliable early reading assessmentdesigned to identify the reading development of students in kindergarten through third grade
2. All of the LEA's currently utilize FitnessGram © as a non-cognitive indicator of growth.This program emphasizes physical well-being and motor development
3. The Individualized Graduation Plans (IGP) will be used as to track college and career-readiness.
4. Increasing the percentage of students participating in college- and career-ready indicators such as ACT, SAT, and other college entrance examination and increase the scores by participating students annually, overall and by subgroup.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant states that the grant manager, financial manager and PSP's will work throughout each school year with each LEA in the Consortium through the superintendent designees, SBDM leadership teams and campus staff to evaluate the effectiveness of grant activities. Quarterly reports from LEA's to the grant management team will provide progress documentation of the implementation of expected activities. Idea sharing from these quarterly reports on what is working well with one LEA in the Consortium will be shared by the grant management team with other LEA's. These reports will include data specific to activities implemented. The grant management team will also meet at least once annually with superintendent designees from each Consortium LEA to review staff, budget and effectiveness of grant

activities overall. Recommendations from these lead members of each LEA in the Consortium will drive decision making by the grant management team regarding productive use of time, staff, money, technology and other resources in order to improve results. Although the Applicant provides a set of activities and strategies, together these do not provide a high quality plan (i.e Lacks specific goals, timelines, and persons responsible) to evaluate the effectiventss of Rtt-District.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's budget including the narrative, idenfies all funds that will support the project. The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the Applicant's proposal; however the Applicant does not provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities including fund descriptions and identification of funds that will be used for one-time investments versus ongoing operational costs. The Applicant does not adequately describe effective strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant did not provide a high qality plan for this proposal and sustainability. The Applicant listed the following examples of sustainability efforts:

1. Using currently allocated program funds

2. Leveraging partners

3. Continue the use of local, state, and other federal funds

4. The Collaborative will collectively will use state and federal fund sources to extend the project initiatives after the end of the RTT-D funding

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 address this criteria.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not	Not Met

	Met	

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant did not provide a clear vision supported by a high quality plan that included was framed in the four assurances. The Applicant did not adequately addresshow they plan to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to critically 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. The Applicant is a consortium, representing LEAs with very challenging populations including homeless children, foster children, and adjudicated children who live in rural communities in extreme poverty and isolation. The Applicant's vision is ambitious; however, the Applicant did not adequately demonstrate their capacity to implement and sustain their proposed reform.

Total	210	95

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1451TX-2 for Raven School

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not present a comprehensive school reform vision. Four goals are listed, but they are not clearly linked to the 4 core educational assurance areas or the absolute priority. There is no discussion of the consortium's context or here and now and where they want to be four years later when the term of the grant ends.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal is developed by a consortium of four primarily rural and small Texas school districts. Two of the school districts have a traditional pre K -12 configuration and the other two are charter school districts. It's not clear how the later are structured, but they apparently serve adjudicated youth in residential settings. 2,790 students in all will participate. Apparently, all schools will participate in the grant and virtually all students are high need and and from low income families (89%). However, there is no list of participating schools and no discussion of how the consortium was formed. School type, grade levels and/or subjects to be affected by this proposal are not clear.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium does not present a high quality plan for the implementation of its numerous school reform initiatives. There is no specific discussion of its plan in selection criterion A 3. The plan, however was found at the end of the appendix, which is not page numbered. What's missing is a clear rationale for the numerous proposed activities. Also there is little indication of what school, district, grade level, and subject area will be targeted. For example the John H. Wood Charter School District is not

mentioned in the plan. The consortium seems to confuse logic model and high quality plan. The logic model and theory of change should be embedded within the high quality plan.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has not developed a comprehensive vision making it even more challenging to set clear performance measures and targets for the project. The application does present a logic model but, It is not clear what LEA will do what. Schools and number of students within sub groups are not identified. There is no narrative discussion of student learning, performance and equity within this section. 159 pages of Texas Education Agency achievement data are simply added to the appendix with no elaboration, interpretation or analysis.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant claims that the districts have made progress meeting federal and state standards over the past four years. However Texas AYP data (Appendix 2) for 2011 -12 indicate that three of the four districts missed AYP in either reading or math or both. Furthermore, there is no narrative discussion of accomplishments or successes during the past four years. Several district commendations and acknowledgements are listed with no explanation. A clear record of success is not evident in this application.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports that the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) is published annually. Also district report cards are sent to parents and posted on district web sites annually. Personnel expenditures for each district are clearly presented and available.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium appears to have developed a supportive culture and the right conditions for working collaboratively. There is no mention of the state legal,statutory, and regulatory context and how it will help or hinder the consortium's reforms efforts in the future. No supporting evidence is included.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It appears that stakeholder involvement incuding teachers, parents, students, and principals was meaningful and extensive in making a commitment to this RttT - D application. Informational meetings and focus groups were held in each district and each district also signed off on the application's Memorandum of Understanding. Letters of support are not extensive or representative of a wide range of internal and internal stakeholders. Virtually all of the letters are formatted and worded exactly the same. There is a strong letter of support from the Raven School signed by the teaching staff.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The current status of personalized learning within the consortium is not specified. Numerous solutions or activities are offered without any analysis of the problem. A clear rationale for proposed activities needs to be developed. Also, as mentioned earlier, there is little indication of what school, district, grade level, or subject area will be targeted. For example the John H. Wood Charter School District is not mentioned in the plan. Also the applicant's plan calls for "prescriptive instruction" rather than instruction that is personalized and based on student interests and strengths.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists some important ingredients of a high quality plan to improve teaching and learning and personalize learning environments. However, part of the problem is that specific students, schools, grade levels and subject areas are never identified in this application. Section C (1) seems to best fit and be intended for high school students. Yet, at least two of the district's in this consortium also have elementary schools and the application does not discuss or clarify how they will participate. The focus seems to be on developing college and career readiness at the high school level by increasing the use of technology leading to the creation of personalized learning plans. Differentiated instruction, project based learning, and the use of technology are proposed as solutions, but they are not thoughtfully discussed in any detail for specific age groups or sub groups of students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not developed a high quality or coherent implementation plan to provide meaningful professional development to its teaching staff. A specific training plan for building staff capacity to personalize student learning was not developed in any detail. Topics or activities are mentioned but they are not discussed or elaborated with any meaningful detail, integration, or analysis. Examples of topics mentioned include job embedded professional development, swap and share best practices, differentiated instruction, project based learning, and technology. While the applicant attempted to respond to the selection criterion and its sub sections in C (2), a high quality plan for professional development did not emerge.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium appears to have practices, policies and rules in place to support project implementation. The consortium has developed an organizational structure and chart to ensure effective management of the project. Furthermore schools all have Site Based Decision Making Teams (SBDM) of representative stakeholders and they have the autonomy and flexibility to discuss and influence school schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, and school level budgets. Furthermore students within the consortium have opportunities for credit recovery and extended day tutoring. A mastery approach is valued. E-readers and Netbooks will be used giving students the ability to study the curriculum beyond the school

day in the evening, on weekends ,during the summer, and even on holidays. Since the districts are small and rural, the consortium will increase college and career readiness skills in the sciences through virtual laboratories .

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium will use interoperable web portal technology to enable the integration of existing and proposed technology enhancements. Students and parents will have the capability to communicate with school teaching staff and constantly monitor student progress. Technical support will be ensured through the implementation of the interoperable web portal. Staff, students and parents will be trained in the operation of the system. They will use it to retrieve program updates, calls to action, event reminders, and the actual curriculum. Beginning in middle school the system will be used to develop general education and graduation plans. The consortium appears committed to having schools use the inoperable data system for a wide a variety of activities consistent with the requirement of this application.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section is too general and not specific to the selection criteia. The four LEAs involved have the same basic four goals, reflective of personalized learning. The districts are primarily small and rural. They have an organizational leadership structure designed to implement and monitor the project. Members from this group will meet regularly with site based decision making teams to monitor and adjust plans as needed. Two LEAs are traditionally structured Pre K-12 and two are charter school district's with no specified grade levels mentioned serving adjudicated youth in residential settings. Developing a continuous improvement plan for these LEAs is very challenging since the plan mixes different populations of students. For example, specific schools, grade level cohorts, student sub groups, age groups or subject areas are never identified. The continuous improvement section of the consortium's plan is not high quality.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Primary communications strategies with internal and external stakeholders revolves around the interoperable web portal. It will serve as a means to communicate progress of the grant's plan and the academic progress of students. Communication will vary according to types of student served i.e.., elementary school, middle school, high school, charter school, and/or residential school (adjudicated youth).

A clearer plan for engaging with internal and external stakeholders is needed to ensure the project's continuous improvement across multiple and very different school communities. It is not clear how the consortium will adjust and revise its plan when it actually receives feedback from constituents.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

14 performance indicators were developed and discussed. One performance indicator was presented three times, the fitness gram. Grade levels are not associated with several of the performance indicators. Rationales were provided, but often were not fully developed. Schools were not specified.

Students from the four LEAs were essentially lumped together. It would make more sense to develop performance measures for traditional schools, charter schools and residential schools. Given the different student populations these LEAs serve, performance measure need to clearly reflect the diversity of the student population.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Plans for evaluating the effectiveness of RttT - D funded activities are not sufficiently developed. Several general ideas and activities were presented. The grant management team will assume primary responsibility and work with each LEA superintendent designee to evaluate the effectiveness of grant activities. Examples of procedures include idea sharing, quarterly data specific reports, and an annual meeting with superintendent designees from each LEA to review staff, budget, and effectiveness of grant activities overall.

This section (E) 4 of the application is under developed. Little narrative discussion, reflection or analysis is provided and the evaluation plan is not linked to the overall project plan presented in the application's appendix. It appears as though each LEA will primarily act an an independent agent rather than as a consortium working together on a shared agenda. A clearly designed evaluation process has not been designed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The project plan itself is not clearly developed making it challenging to force fit a budget on top of a plan that is not sufficiently explained. Other sources of funding are loosely linked to the proposed budget. It's impossible to assess the reasonableness of budgetary requests because the discussion is not specificly focused on the question of what the LEAs propose to do. The applicant talks about at least four different types of goals or projects: project goals; plan goals; vision goals; and 5 major projects? All of these goals/projects and their indicators are different. Furthermore, The John Wood Charter School district is not mentioned in the consortiums' project plan, making it even more challenging to determine who gets funds and for what. The application includes an overall budget summary, but no project level summaries and no overall budget summary narrative are provided. Consequently, its impossible to accurately determine why and how budgetary requests will be spent.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Discussion regarding the sustainability of the project's budget needs further development. The applicant claims that the five identified and proposed projects were chosen with sustainability in mind and that they would be built into the districts' annual planning process, but there is no further elaboration or discussion. The applicant also mentions that local, state, and federal sources will be used to extend the project after the grant period, but again there is no further elaboration or discussion.

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 repsond to this selection criterion and left it blank.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The project's proposed plan for the personalization of learning is not adequately developed:

- Goals and activities to create personalized learning experiences and opportunites for students are minimally developed and explained.
- A clear rationale or needs assessment for proposed goals and activities is not presented in the application.
- It's not clear what problem the application is trying to address.
- The John Woods Charter District is not included in the proposed plan.
- Specific schools, grade levels, student groups and subject areas are not identified in the plan.

Total	210	80

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1451TX-3 for Raven School

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools did not adequately articulate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision built upon the four assurance areas (adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace; building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers and principals; turning around low achieving schools).

The vision presented in the application is very short and the details are sparse. The applicant did list four goals for the Consortium under Vision (Section A1): (1) Increase student achievement in Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in all local education agencies in the consortium; (2) Increase student achievement in one LEA in Science; (3) Decrease achievement gaps between subgroups in Reading /ELA and mathematics.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools in the middle of the low range.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools indicates in the application that the consortium is made up of four Local Education Agencies (LEAs)--Big Sandy Independent School District (ISD), Goodrich ISD, John H. Wood Jr. Charter District, Raven School, However, inadequate information is provided about the participating schools and students. The applicant does not list the names of all of the schools that will participate. The number of participating educators, the number students from low-income families, and the number of high-needs students was provided only for the schools in the Goodrich district (i.e., it was not provided for the other three districts in the consortium).

Raven School-Infinity Schools did not adequately describe the process that was used to select schools that would participate in grant activities. It was unclear whether all schools in the four LEAs would participate or whether it would be a subset of them.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the top of the low range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools includes a logic model in its application which shows the relationship between inputs/resources, activities, outputs, and outcome effects for each of the four project goals. However, the model is difficult to follow because the model lumps process outcomes (i.e., quality of content, design, and delivery implementation) and longer-term student outcomes together.

The applicant indicates that the reforms described in the proposal have the potential to be scaled up for use in other small and rural LEAs; however, details are not provided about how Raven School-Infinity schools intends to disseminate information about how to replicate what it does.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools toward the upper end of the middle range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools includes goals for increasing performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, improving college enrollment rates, and increasing post-secondary degree attainment. The achievement gap and graduation rate goals are broken down by race/ethnicity. It is unclear why similar subgroup-level data were not included for all goals.The application would be stronger if the other goals were also broken down by race/ethnicity.

It is also a concern that goals were not presented for some high-needs subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and ELLS.

It is unclear why some post-grant goals are lower for some grades than others. For example, on the summative assessment in mathematics for Grade 7 the post-grant goal is 93%, in Grade 8 it is 81%, and in Grade 9 it is 95%. (Grade 8 students were also doing less well in the baseline years than students in the surrounding grades). The plan is not ambitous, though it may be achievable. It is a concern that students in Grade 8 were doing less well in the baseline years than students in other grades—and that the Applicant does not seek to resolve whatever the instructional issues are at that grade level so that by the end of the grant that Grade 8 students are as successful as students in other grades.

It is unclear what percentage of students across all of the schools in the Raven School-Infinity Consortium are from racial/ethnic minorities—but the application does indicate that 21% of the students in one of the LEAs (Big Sandy ISD) participating in the consortium are American Indian. The baseline data shows that less than 1% of American Indian students are currently graduating. It is a concern that by the end of the grant only 7% of this subgroup is expected to graduate—whereas 99% of the overall population is expected to graduate. Similarly, alarming, extremely low graduation rate goals were also set for the two other racial/ethnic subgroups (African-American, Hispanic-American).

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the low end of the middle range.

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

	Available	Score

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Raven School-Infinity Schools application provides some evidence of a high-quality plan as demonstrated by some indicators of its track record. The Applicant includes an impressive array of detailed historic achievement data for the past four years in an appendix. It appears to have been printed directly from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website. However, the tables are organized in a way that makes it extremely difficult to tell whether each LEA has a clear record of success. For example, the 2010 and 2011 data are presented in one set of tables and the 2008 and 2009 data are presented in a different set of tables.

The Applicant did not describe how student performance data are presented to students, educators, and parents. If is unclear whether students, educators, and parents are expected to use same dense tables that were included in this application. If so, students, educators, and parents would find it extremely difficult to use the extremely detailed, yet poorly organized data, in ways will inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools near the middle of the mid-range.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Raven-Infinity Schools indicated that district- and campus-level salary expenditures are published annually through the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). A strong example of some of the district-level data that are available in the AEIS system were included in the application, and the applicant indicated that similar data were available at the school level. Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the top end of the high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School–Infinity Schools merely states that the leaders of the partner districts indicate that they have sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments, but provides no details. The application fails to describe any specific State legal, statutory, or regulatory requirements that would provide the conditions and autonomy needed to implement personalized learning environments. Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the high end of the low range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School—Infinity Schools adequately engaged many stakeholder groups in the development of this proposal. Representatives of students, families, teachers met to discuss the Race to the Top –District completion and to develop a common vision for implementation.

None of the LEAs in the consortium have collective bargaining. The applicant states that more than 70% of the teachers from each district, and collaboratively as a whole, support the proposal. However, inadequate evidence is provided to support this assertion. A letter of support that was signed by 12 teachers at Raven School indicates support for this application—though it is unclear whether they represent more than 70% of the teachers at Raven. Similar letters (or other types of evidence) from teachers for the other LEAs in the consortium were not provided.

Overall this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the middle of the mid-range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools nicely lays out in a matrix the goals, activities, timeline and who is responsible. However, it is unclear how the consortium analyzed needs, and the logic behind the identified goals. Overall this places Raven School-Infinity School at the high end of the middle range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Details are very sparse in the Raven School-Infinity Schools application about how it plans to implement personalized environments. The Applicant indicates that differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and the purposeful use of technology will be the primary approaches, but specific information about how these approaches will be used to engage and empower all learners is not provided.

A strength of the application is that students will have individualized learning plans, and that benchmark results will be used to help structure learning and measure progress toward goals. The Applicant indicates that the individualized learning plans will help focus on student mastery of critical academic content, goal setting and goal attainment, but the details are vague.

It is unclear whether the proposed plan for personalized learning environments will ensure that all students can graduate on time. The Applicant mentions the use of individualized graduation plans; however, it is unclear what the individualized graduation plans entail and whether their use might result in some students failing to graduate in a timely manner.

The Applicant fails to adequately describe how accommodations and other high-quality strategies will be used to help ensure that high-need students are on track to meeting college- and career- ready standards.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools in the the middle range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Raven-Infinity Schools indicates that it will build capacity to support student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards. However, little specific information is provided about Raven School-Infinity Schools' plan to personalize the learning environment in order to improve teaching and learning. .

The Applicant indicates that all participating students will take summative and formative assessments, but specific, detailed information about how the data will be used to inform the teaching and learning process is not provided.

A strength of the application that educators in Raven School-Infinity Schools will have access to embedded professional development "24/7/365", but no information is provided about what this entails. The application also states that educators will swap and share best practices across the consortium, but the processes that will facilitate this sharing is not described.

Raven School-Infinity Schools indicates that school leaders will have training, polices, tools, data, and resources to help them structure effective learning environments—but specific details are not provided.

Rural LEAs, including the members of the Raven School-Infinity Schools consortium, face some unique challenges recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers. Some information is provided about how consortium members plan to recruit, retain, and reward highly effective teachers (for example, cross train personnel, national/state/local searches, web-based advertisements), but evidence of a high-quality, coherent plan is lacking .

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools at the low end of the middle range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools indicates that the lead LEA (Raven School) will manage the grant. However, the implementation of high quality multi-district governance structures can be challenging. It is a concern that the application does not provide details about the consortium governance structure.

It is a strength of the application that all consortium members currently have site-based decision making teams that have sufficient autonomy and flexibility over key factors such as school schedules.

The consortium includes LEAs that receive adjudicated youth for periods of time less than a standard school year—and a strength of the application is that it provides comprehensive information about how the unique needs of this group will be met.

Raven School-Infinity Schools provides convincing evidence that flexible scheduling will be utilized to individualize learning experiences and that students will be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know.

Overall, this places Raven School-Infinity Schools towards the middle of the high range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools adequately describes how it plans to use interoperable web portal technology that integrates proposed and existing technology. The Applicant indicates that the portal will be accessible to parents and students. The Applicant also indicates that parents will receive training in how to use the portal. However, the application does not provide adequate information about how the consortium will ensure that economically disadvantaged students and parents have access outside of school.

Overall, the Applicant scores in the middle of the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools appropriately recognizes that continuous improvement processes will differ across the LEAs the consortium. It is reasonable that the site-based decision making teams will have an important role in developing and implementing the continuous improvement process.

The Applicant indicates that information relevant to the continuous improvement process is presented in Appendices 7-10; however, Appendices 8-10 were not included in the application. The missing appendices make it difficult to understand exactly how the continuous improvement process will be carried out; though, in general the loosely-structured continuous improvement process is appropriate for a consortium of rural LEAs. Overall Raven School scores towards the upper end of the middle range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools adequately describes how it will communicate with parents, students, and the larger community using the portal that it plan to develop as part of this project. Since the consortium includes members who instruct adjudicated youth, the application also provides convincing evidence that it will provide ongoing communication with child protective services, caseworkers, and probation officers.

The Applicant provides vague information regarding how the consortium will communicate with, and engage, internal stakeholders—particularly teachers and other school staff who are not members of site based decision making teams. The applicant mentioned that teachers will be “engaged” in the portfolio evaluation process, but to successfully implement the activities proposed in this application it is necessary to have much broader methods of communicating with and engaging teachers.

Overall, Raven School-Infinity Schools scored at the high end of the middle level.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools identified fourteen performance measures. The Applicant provided a reasonable rationale for each measure.

The Applicant did describe how it planned to review and improve the measures over time if any measures were found to be insufficient to gauge implementation progress

Overall, the Raven School-Infinity Schools scored at the bottom the high range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools indicates that evaluation of the program by the grant management team will be ongoing, and that there will be at least an annual review of staff, budget, effectiveness of overall grant activities. The applicant did not adequately describe how formative evaluation would be used in order refine how funded activities were implemented and to improve results. Overall Raven School-Infinity Schools scored at the high level of the mid-range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools provided a brief, inadequate narrative and a budget with insufficient detail. For example, for Equipment the Applicant budgeted $571,410 in Year 1, $212,900 in Year 2, $135,684 in Year 3, and $6,118 in Year 4 for a total of $926,112; however, no information is provided about what Equipment the Applicant plans to purchase.

The Applicant indicates that the partner districts have committed to using various fund sources (ESEA, State Compensatory Education, Special Education—when appropriate, etc.) to ensure successful implementation. The applicant did not adequately Identify which funds will be used for one time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational expenses.

Overall, the Raven School-Infinity Schools scores at the high end of the low range.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is unclear whether Raven School-Infinity Schools will be able to successfully sustain the project goals after the end of the grant. Raven School-Infinity Schools indicates that local, state, and federal funds will be used to continue the use of personalized learning plans that are designed to lead to college and career ready graduates. However, it is a major concern that the applicant states that “it is not feasible, given the current fiscal climate of both school funding and our general economy to project funding amounts past 2016.” Overall the applicant scored at the high end of the low level.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Raven School-Infinity Schools did not complete this section of the Application, and does not meet this priority. It scores at the low end of the low range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This application minimally met Absolute Priority 1. Raven School-Infinity Schools met Absolute Priority 1 because each of the core educational assurance areas are addressed at some point in the application. However, there are many limitations to this application.

Raven School-Infinity Schools failed to articulate an adequate vision to guide it in developing the remainder of the application.

This resulted in the application meandering in a number of different unfocused directions.

The application provides little detail regarding how it plans to create personalized learning environments. Likewise, only a summary budget was provided that included major categories (personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, supplies, contractual), but no details regarding how this would support the development of personalized learning environments.

Overall, the Raven School-Infinity Schools application is a weak application. It is minimally coherent and marginally comprehensive; however when viewed holistically this application does meet Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	93